

RESULT of "CRICKET SCORERS" COMPETITION Inside

# The MAGNET<sup>D</sup>

EVERY SATURDAY.



Thrilling yarn of  
Schoolboy Adventure—  
No. 1,185. Vol. XXXVIII.

"THE CITY OF DEATH!" —inside.

Week Ending November 1st, 1939.



YOU'RE INVITED TO—



# Come Into the Office, Boys!

Have your Editor in pleased to answer questions and discuss topics of general interest. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringham Street, E.C.4. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**O**NE of my girl readers, Miss Irene Norman, of Islington, N.1., has "come into the office" this week to ask me a question which has been puzzling her. She wants to know

## HOW PIERs ARE BUILT.

"Doesn't the water interfere with the foundations when the tide is in?" she asks. No; it doesn't—because it doesn't get a chance to do so. The water is held back by temporary walls while the foundations are placed in position, and then the temporary walls are taken away when all is ready.

The same method is carried out in the building of lighthouses and bridges, and the greatest difficulty has to be faced when mud is found underneath the water. In cases such as this, huge hollow cylinders of steel are constructed, and pushed down through the water and mud. The water is then pumped out, and the mud is removed. The cylinders are filled full of concrete, and then serve as the foundations for the bridge or pier. There are very few problems nowadays that modern engineers don't know how to tackle!

The next question this week comes from "Amateur Photographer," of Kendal, who wants to mix his own chemicals for

## DEVELOPING BOLL FILMS.

Here is a good formula: Metol 7 grains; Hydroquinone 30 grains; Sodium Sulphite (Cryst.) 220 grains; Sodium Carbonate (Cryst.) 400 grains; and Potassium Bromide 6 grains. Mix into one solution with 20 ounces of water.

Develop the complete spool in one length for about three and a half minutes. After developing give the film a quick rinse in water, and then fix for eight to ten minutes in an acid fixing bath, made as follows:

Hypo-sulphite of Soda 1 lb., water 40 ounces; Metabisulphite of Potassium 1 ounce. This is better than a plain hypo solution, as it instantly stops any further developing action, and thus ensures cleaner and brighter negatives.

After fixing, the film should be washed in water for half an hour, changing the water frequently. Clips should be used on the ends of the film to avoid risk of damaging it by scratching, and, when drying, the film should be hung so as to allow the air access to both sides of it, and a clip should be attached to the top and bottom of the strip.

## WHAT IS A "SCRAN BAG"?

**D**O you know? Tom Dickenson, of Harrow, has been puzzled by the expression, so he has written to me to ask what it means. Well, as you know, sailors in the Navy are taught to be very neat and tidy, and to put everything away in its proper place. If they are careless enough to leave some of their personal belongings lying about,

these are promptly collected and put into a bag which is known as the "scran bag." It is the custom in the Navy that the owner must pay a piece of soap before he can redeem an article from the "scran bag."

And now a joke for which Dennis Pogson, of 61, Eastbourne Road, Port Elizabeth, S. Africa, has been awarded one of this week's handsome pocket-knives.



Left Man: "Here you are, sonny! This is your beer!"  
Superior Youth: "How dare you call me 'sonny'?"  
You are not my father."



Left Man: "Well, I brought you up, didn't I?"

Has it ever struck you what a tremendous amount of work there must be connected with the sinking of a new mine, whether it be for gold, or for something more familiar, but equally as important, such as coal?

R.M.S., a reader who lives in Brighton, wants to know

## HOW MINES ARE SUNK.

and how those who sink them know that certain minerals are to be discovered at these particular spots? Well, first of all, those who have made a study of geology know by the earth's strata where certain minerals are to be found; but, of course, they cannot tell whether they are in sufficient quantities to make it worth while to sink a mine. To discover this, it is necessary to get samples of the rock deep down below the earth, and long steel rods are driven into the earth, and the samples which they cut out are brought up to the surface.

I had the opportunity of seeing some of these samples which were brought up in Kent when boring operations were carried out to find out how much coal there was in that county's coalfield. Some of them showed that the strata of coal were broken and uneven, and therefore it was useless to go to the expense of sinking mines in those spots. But others showed that good commercial coal was to be discovered in big quantities, and mines were then sunk—and are still being sunk.

Kent has the deepest coal mine in this country, which goes to a depth of over 3,000 feet. The deepest mine in the world, however, is a gold mine in Brazil, which is 6,726 feet deep!

Incidentally, one of the most up-to-date aerial railways is to be found in Kent. This is the ropeway which connects the coal mine at Tilsmanstone with the bunkering-depot at Dover. It is seven miles long, and carries great buckets of coal

over fields and roads, finally tipping them into vast bunkers on the eastern arm of Dover harbour.

**A** NOTTINGHAM chum, who read one of my paragraphs referring to bull-fighting in Spain, asks me to tell him

## HOW TORREADORS ARE TRAINED.

for their risky and arduous jobs? Well, every now and again in the principal towns of Spain, "open" bull-fights are held, in which anyone can join in. A large number of bulls are turned loose into the arena, and the spectators swarm over the boards and commence to tackle the beasts.

They are not allowed to do any sword-play, but they stand up to the rushes of the bulls, and do their best to dodge them in the approved style of the professional bull-fighters.

Hoodlum to say, the arena is generally soon overcrowded, for as many as two hundred amateur torreadors will flock into the ring, and there will sometimes be a dozen bulls rushing here and there among them. Under the circumstances the bulls get a little of their own back, and many are the boys and men who go down before the mad rushes of the beasts, and get badly gored. A youngster who shows great promise in these amateur "fights" can generally get an opportunity of appearing at an ordinary performance, and, provided he is smart enough, will be given a position as one of the assistant torreadors, from which he has an opportunity of working up to a "star" performer.

A dandy pocket wallet has been forwarded to John Woodcock, Warradale Post Office, South Australia, who has submitted the following Greyfriars Epigram:

In the States they don't think about work.  
Concentration on cornering pork  
Is old Hiram K.'s joy;  
And young Fisher, his boy,  
Is a sheet of this businesslike stuff!

**S**PACE is getting short, as I will have to hold over several answers to queries in order to tell you about the features I have in store for

## NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE.

Frank Richards goes on from success to success in his fine Greyfriars yarn, and in next week's story, which is entitled:

## "SAVED FROM THE SEA!"

he gives you a real top-notch which is as full of good stuff as an egg is of meat. The Famous Five are up against something next week, and so is Billy Bunter, but they tackle their difficulty right royally, and keep the old Greyfriars flag flying in the manner which you have learned to expect of them. There are chuckles as well as thrills in this yarn, and you won't want to leave it until you've read every word of it!

Then comes another long instalment of our great new Sonnet serial, "Up, the Rovers!" and when I tell you that the author, John Breasley, is well up to the top of his form, you'll know that you can expect a first-rate instalment. The "Greyfriars Herald" will appear as usual, and is guaranteed to raise a number of smiles on your face.

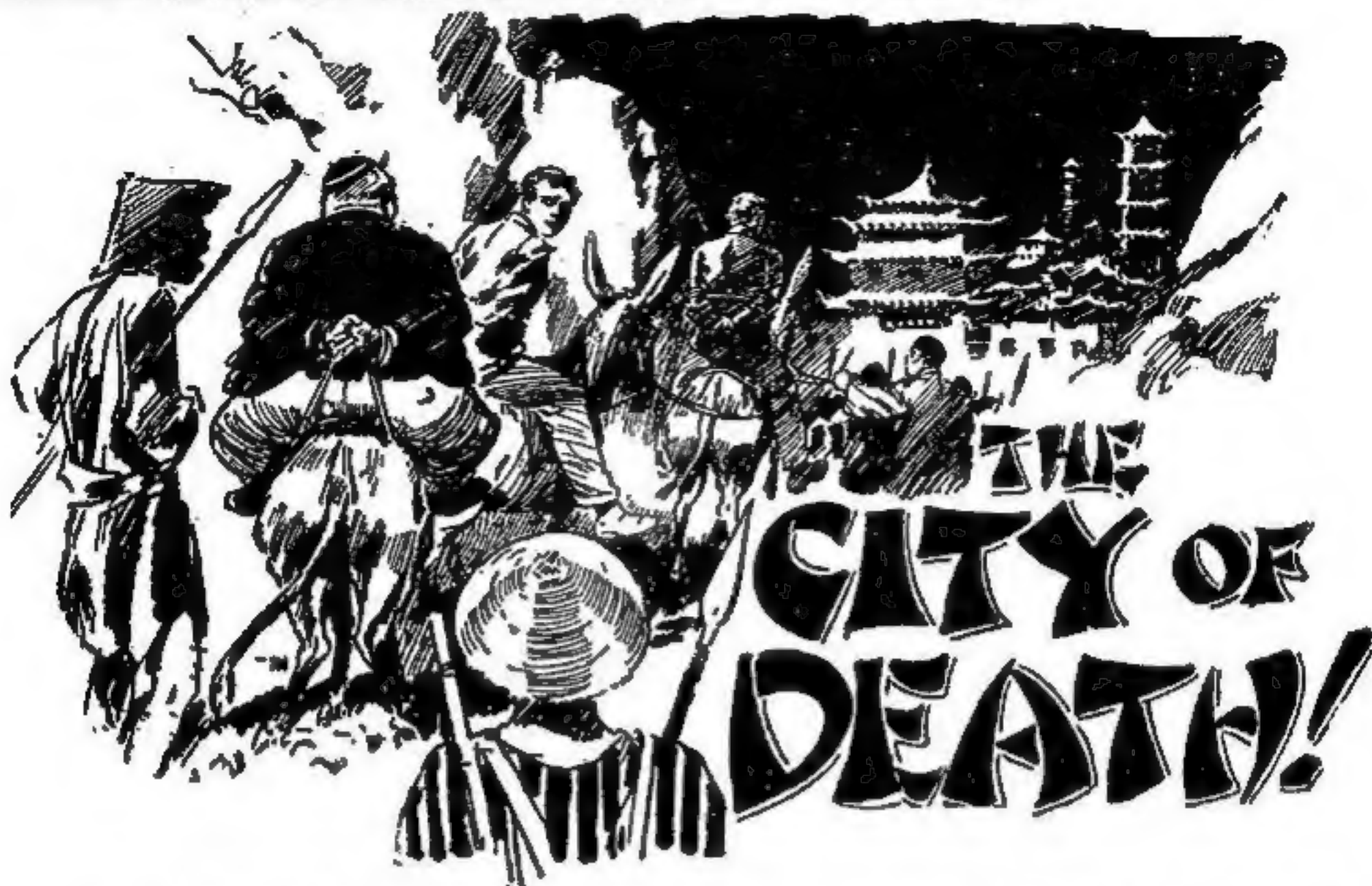
Another poem by the Greyfriars rhymester, more jokes and limericks, and a cheery little chat complete the programme. So don't miss it whatever you do!

YOUR EDITOR.

If at first you don't succeed,  
try, try, try again!

Send along your jokes or your Greyfriars Epigram—or both—and win our useful prizes of pocket wallets and Sheffield steel penknives. All efforts to be sent to: c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comm.)





# THE CITY OF DEATH!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### In the Power of the Mandarin!

"O H crikey!" Billy Bunter groaned. It was not uncommon for Bunter to grouse. With cause, or without cause, in season and out of season, Bunter would grouse. But on the present occasion it had to be admitted that Bunter had just cause for grouching.

Tied on the back of a donkey, travelling a dusty road in a hot sun, Bunter felt that it was about the limit.

He had grouched considerably on the journey to China. He had grouched still more after landing in that delectable country. But his grouching now outdid all his previous efforts in that line.

He grouched, he grumbled, and he groaned.

Certainly, he was not having a good time. Neither was the Chinese donkey that carried him. That patient beast was used to heavy burdens. But Bunter's weight was something new to him, and many times the patient ass turned his head and gazed at his rider with a sad expression.

Bunter wished that the beastly journey was over. Probably the donkey wished it still more fervently than Bunter.

"Oh dear! Oh, crikey! Ow!"

"Keep a stiff upper lip, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ow!"

"Don't let these Chinks hear you muffling, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "Beast!"

On either side of Bunter, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were bound to donkeys' backs, with their arms tied behind them.

Ahead of them rode a Chinese soldier, leading the three donkeys on a rope.

Behind them were more soldiers. In front was the magnificent horse-litter in which rode the Mandarin Tang

Weng. Round the litter rode many armed guards.

For the latter part of the night, and for a whole burning morning, the three prisoners had ridden thus.

They were on their way to Pan-shan, the city in the interior of China, ruled by the mandarin.

Little as they had to hope, after once the gates of Pan-shan had closed behind them, the Greyfriars fellows were glad to see the city in the distance ahead. At least it meant the end of that painful journey.

Far behind them, many a long mile by hill and plain, were their chums, in the city of Canton. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were still safe in Canton; and it was a consolation to Wharton and Bob to know that they were safe. Unfortunately, it was no consolation to Billy Bunter, who had almost forgotten their existence.

**Harry Wharton & Co. in the hands of the merciless Tang Wang. . . Thousands of miles behind them is Greyfriars. . . Before them lies the City of Death!**

His fat thoughts being wholly and solely concentrated on his fat self.

Bunter could bear, with great fortitude, anybody's troubles but his own. His own worried him deeply.

"I say, you fellows!" groaned Bunter.

"Cheer up, old chap!" said Bob.

"Your brother isn't complaining."

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Eh? What brother, you fathhead?"

"The one that's carrying you."

"You—you—you silly idiot!" gasped Bunter.

"Is this a time for your rotten jokes?"

"Your brother's having a worse time than you are," argued Bob. "Take a lesson from him and try to be a patient ass."

"Beast!"

"I suppose that's Pan-shan," said Harry Wharton, with a nod towards the walls of the city gleaming in the sun ahead. "We shan't be long now."

"I'll be glad to get out of this blessed sun and dust!" said Bob.

"Same here!"

"I say, you fellows!" groaned Bunter. "I wish we hadn't come to China."

"Lot of good wishing that now!" said Bob.

"I thought I was going to have a jolly good time."

"Well, you haven't had a bad time. Think of that gorgeous feed you had in Mr. Wan's house at Canton."

Bunter emitted a deep groan.

He was hungry—frightfully hungry! The thought of the delicious feast in Mr. Chung Lung's house at Canton was sheer torture to him.

"And we're not dead yet, you know," said Bob, whose cheery spirits could not be crushed, even by his present dismal situation and the perilous prospect that lay ahead. "While there's life there's hope."

Groan!

Hope is said to spring eternal in the human breast.

But there did not seem much left in Bunter's podgy breast.

"Ferrers Locke will do the best he can for us," said Harry.

Groan!

Bunter seemed to have little faith in what the celebrated Baker Street detective could do for them.

"We got away once," said Bob encouragingly. "We may get away again."

Groan!

"I dare say they'll give us some grub when we arrive in Pan-shan!" added Bob.

Bunter brightened up.

Bob Cherry had evidently touched the right chord.



"Think so?" he asked, with deep earnestness.

"Pretty sure, old bean. They want to keep us alive," said Bob consolingly. "That footling old frump, Tang Wang, thinks that Ferrers Locke will follow us, to help us out, and that he will get his clutches on him. I rather think he won't. Locke's too deep for a blinking Chink. They're sure to feed us."

"I could eat a horse!" said Bunter, almost tearfully. "I could eat a wild tiger. I turned up my nose at those snails and frogs they offered us to eat at old Wun's house. I could eat them now."

"We'll get away yet," said Bob. "Think of getting back to Canton and sitting down to a terrific feed!"

"Ah!" sighed Bunter ecstatically.

"Think of getting back to Greyfriars, and a spread in the study!" went on Bob Cherry.

"Ah!" sighed Bunter again.

He seemed a little comforted.

The procession wound on along the dusty road, under the burning sun. The curtains of the horse-litter were closed, screening the mandarin from the gaze of common eyes, and from sun and dust. Since leaving the roadside inn, many long and weary hours ago, the juniors had seen nothing of the yellow demon into whose power they had fallen.

Many passengers passed on the road—merchants, travelling on camels, travellers in sedan-chairs, borne on the shoulders of sweating coolies, blue-clad peasants tramping on foot. Many of them stopped to kow-tow to the invisible mandarin in the gaudy litter. All of them cleared hastily out of the way of the guards. Some glanced curiously at the three prisoners riding in the midst of the soldiers.

Sometimes a curse was hurled at the "foreign devils" from some disgruntled Chinese on the road. But as a rule the glances only expressed curiosity; occasionally pity. But if the juniors had hoped that any one would intervene on their account, they soon learned that there was nothing in it.

That Tang Wang was all powerful in Pan-shan and its vicinity was proved by the fact that he marched his prisoners openly along the road, in sight of all who passed.

In the province of Kwang-si, which they were now traversing, there was evidently no administration of law powerful enough to keep the mandarin in check.

Law, indeed, had never been strong in China, and in the present distracted state of the country, with half a dozen insurgent war-lords at war with one another, it was more feeble than ever. Bandits swarmed in the hills, pirates on the rivers, and every general of a few thousand ragged soldiers was a law unto himself. Tang Wang was on terms of alliance with the particular war-lord who was strong in Kwang-si, and in his own city he ruled with a rod of iron. In Pan-shan Tang Wang, in fact, was the law—all the law there was!

Weary, dusty, hungry, thirsty, the juniors watched the city as they drew nearer to it, by the road across the plains.

High, white walls, with a high, embattled gateway through which the road ran, faced them; they could see soldiers on the summit of the wall, and on the top of the arch over the great gates.

Close by the gates was a smaller arch, through which a canal ran, glistening in the sun until it disappeared into the gloomy shadow of the archway.

Boats and sampans glided on the canal, which the juniors could guess communicated with the Cho-kiang, the Pearl River of Canton; for much of the trade of the interior went down by water to Canton and Hong Kong.

Nearer to the city the road ran by the bank of the canal, and men on sampans ceased poling to kow-tow on their docks to the mandarin's cortege as it wound by.

"Here we are at last!" gasped Bob Cherry in relief, as the prisoners pined out of the glare of the sun into the deep, cool shadow of the gateway.

Thirty feet over their heads soared the arch—tunnel-like, for the wall was of immense thickness.

The gates stood wide open, as was customary in the daytime, and a numerous guard was on the spot. The horse-litter of the mandarin was greeted with reverential kow-tows, the officer of the guard touching the earth with his forehead. It passed on, and after it went the three prisoners on the asses, with the soldiers following.

The prisoners of the mandarin were in the city of Pan-shan at last.

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## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### In the Yamen at Pan-shan

**H**ARRY WHARTON, twisting in the ropes that bound him to the back of the donkey, stared back at the road through the long, dusky gateway.

Beyond the shadow of the tall arch the road lay shimmering in the blaze of the sun, the canal glistening beside it.

Many passengers could be seen on the road, some on camels, a few on horses, most on foot—the latter chiefly peasants or beggars. Some were coming towards the city; some going from it.

Among them Wharton's eyes searched for a tattered figure in an old blue gown, with bare feet and a bamboo hat and a begging-bowl.

It was Hung, the Chinese beggar, for whom he looked; the man with the begging-bowl, who, under his dirt and rags and yellow skin, was no other than Ferrers Locke, the Baker Street detective.

That the disguised detective was following the mandarin's cavalcade, unknown and unsuspected by the Chinese, Wharton was assured.

It was quite certain that Ferrers Locke, once having got in touch with the captured Greyfriars juniors, would not lose sight of them again.

He was following them to Pan-shan and he was not likely to have difficulty in entering the city.

Whether he would be able to help them, once they were within the walls of the mandarin's yamen, was a problem; but Wharton knew that he would either save them or lose his life in the attempt.

He scanned the road behind, keenly, for the tattered figure of Hung the beggar; but he did not pick it out of the many figures on the road.

A jeering voice spoke to him in Chinese, and one of the soldiers struck him a smart blow across the shoulders with a bamboo.

Wharton gave the man a grim look.

Another rap from the bamboo was his reward; and the junior set his lips and looked straight before him as the procession wound on.

"By gum!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I'd like to have my hands loose for a minute or two and give that Chink teco!"

Wharton nodded, without speaking.

Through the narrow streets the mandarin's cortege wound on its way to the "yamen," the official residence of the governor of Pan-shan.

In Canton the juniors had seen many signs of modern progress; many samples of the reforms instituted by the "advanced" party in China—broad streets, motor-cars, even a motor-omnibus, telegraph and telephone. But in the inland city of Pan-shan there was nothing of the kind to be seen.

The streets were narrow, shaded by matting screens from the sun-glare; dusty, dirty, littered with foul-smelling garbage—Chinese to the last detail.

Crowds jostled and jabbered and swarmed; and the mandarin's guards struck right and left with bamboo sticks to clear the way, blows falling on shoulders and backs, answered by loud howls.

"Modern China" evidently had no footing in the city of Pan-shan.

Since the revolution, in which the Manchu emperors had fallen from their high estate China had been, in name at least, a republic. In theory, Jack was as good as his master, and every coolie the equal of the most truculent old girdle-wearing nobleman.

Nevertheless, a land that had not changed in twenty-five centuries was not likely to change in a hurry at the edicts of a party of progress.

Tens of thousands of Chinese had cut off their pigtails and adopted trousers; but millions remained unchanged.

National ways do not change easily. And in China the great mass of the Chinese follow the old ways. New names are given to old things; new rulers take the place of the old rulers; new tyrants tyrannise in the place of the old tyrants, in China as in Russia. And the great mass of the people submit, as they have always submitted.

Certainly, the juniors saw little sign of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in the streets of Pan-shan.

People scrambled out of the way of the mandarin's cortege, helped by the lashes of the bamboo sticks and an occasional cuff or kick.

In acknowledgment of these kind attentions they bowed to the ground in respect to the mandarin's litter.

Tang Wang had only to raise his finger for any head in Pan-shan to fall; and the inhabitants of the city were only too well aware of the fact. In such circumstances the theory that China was a free and glorious republic was not of much use to them.

Onward went the procession to the gate of the mandarin's yamen, an imposing building surrounded by high walls.

In the courtyard within the three Greyfriars fellows were freed from the donkeys at last.

They dropped to the ground, stiff and aching from their bonds.

"Ow!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I've got the cramp! Ow, ow, wow, ow!"

He leaned heavily on Wharton.

Wharton and Bob Cherry were cramped and aching, too; but they were made of rather sterner stuff than Bunter.

"Buck up, old bean!" murmured Bob.

"Ow! Oh dear!"

"For goodness' sake don't let these Chinks hear you whining!" muttered Wharton impatiently.

"Beast! Ow, wow! Wow!"

The mandarin's litter went on towards the grand entrance of the yamen. But the grand entrance was not for such unimportant small fry as three foreign devils.

They were taken away by a path



through the gardens, Chinese soldiers driving them away with flicks from bamboo canes. Some sort of an official in a highly decorative robe, joined them, the soldiers falling back respectfully. The official was a fat man—built somewhat on the lines of William George Bunter—with a round and rather good-humoured face, and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. He stared very curiously at the three juniors, and spoke to them in English.

"Follow me, foreign devils!"

"Where are we going?" asked Bob Cherry, encouraged to speak by the good-tempered expression on the Chinaman's face.

"You go along prison."

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob.

The juniors had heard of Chinese prisons and their horrors. In spite of their courage, their hearts sank at the prospect of being herded among criminals in over-crowded, evil-smelling, filthy quarters. The fat Chinaman smiled.

"Not common prison," he said.

"You stop in this yamen, under eye of great and pearl-like Tang Wang. This humble person, O No, takes you in his poor custody."

The last sentence perplexed the juniors for a moment or two; then they realised that O No was the name of the fat gentleman, "O" being the surname.

In spite of themselves, they could not help smiling. Chinese names had often struck them as droll; but O No seemed the limit.

The fat gentleman smiled, too. Probably he had observed on previous occasions that his name had an entertaining effect on foreign devils.

"You think the name of this poor person too much comical?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" said Bob; then, realising that he was repeating the name of the Chinaman, he added hastily: "Not at all."

"It is nothing!" said O No. "Foreign devils do not understand. The clan of O was great and famous in China before the Great Wall was built by the Emperor Shih-Huang. But what do the foreign devils know? Nothing."

Mr. O, however, did not seem offended. Evidently his contempt for the barbarians from the West was so great that he felt that he could disregard their absurdities.

"Follow me!" he said again.

The juniors followed him, the soldiers bringing up the rear, no longer flicking the prisoners with the bamboo sticks. It was plain that Mr. O was a person of some consequence.

Behind the official yamen of the mandarin the house extended for a great

With cruel Oriental playfulness, one of the guards threw a stone, which struck the old man's begging-bowl, tilted it, and shot its contents out into the road!



space, a rambling structure of innumerable rooms, passages, and courtyards, like many Chinese mansions.

O No opened a door that looked on a walled garden.

He stepped aside, and signed to the juniors to enter.

Harry Wharton and Bob passed in, and Billy Bunter rolled in after them. The Owl of the Remove turned his spectacles on Mr. O No with a pathetic blink.

"I say, Mr. No—" he began.

The fat Chinaman smiled contemptuously. It was just like a foreign devil to call him Mr. No instead of Mr. O.

"I say, I'm hungry!" said Bunter, in a voice that might have melted the heart of one of the stone dragons over the yamen gate. "I'm famished! I suppose we're going to have something to eat."

"Food shall be sent to you!" said O No.

"Good!" gasped Bunter.

O No stepped back, the door was closed, and a bolt was shot.

The three Greyfriars fellows were left to themselves. To two of them the sound of the shooting bolt was like a knell. Billy Bunter hardly noticed it, however. Bunter's thoughts were concentrated on one subject—one burning question—how long would it be before the grub arrived?

Food was always the fat junior's first consideration; and it was typical of him to think primarily of something to eat when the lives of the three hung on a thread!

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### A Desperate Resolve!

JOHNNY BULL brought his fist down on a little lacquer table in the ko-tang in Mr. Wun's house at Canton with a heavy thump. The table rocked.

Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh looked round.

Nugent's face was pale; Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh had a distressed gloom on his dusky countenance. Johnny Bull had an expression somewhat like that of a bulldog about to bite.

"I've had enough of this!" said Johnny.

"I think we all have!" said Nugent, with a sigh. "If there was anything a fellow could do—"

"The situation is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh sadly.

"We've got to do something!" said Johnny Bull. "Farrers Locke has gone after them, and he's sent no word. We can't stick here safe while they are in the hands of that villain of a mandarin. We can't and won't."

"Locke told us to wait—"

"We've waited!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I don't see how Locke could send news, even if he got in touch with them," said Frank. "He's alone in a hostile country—he could never trust a messenger."

"I know! I know, too, that Farrers Locke will do anything that can be done. But I'm sticking here no longer."

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We told Locke we would wait—and we've waited. It's clear that they've got as far as Pan-shan—they must have been in the city long before this. Tang Wang has got them safe at the yamen, as they call it. Well, that lets us out. We're not bound to wait any longer. Mr. Locke may have been cut to pieces days ago, for all we know."

Nugent and Hurree Singh nodded.

Ferrers Locke had taken his life in his hands in following the kidnapped juniors into the mysterious interior of China, into a region where the only law was the power of the tu-chun, or war-lord, who commanded a lawless army, and who was the ally of Tang Wang.

As likely as not, more likely than not, the famous detective had paid for his temerity with his life.

"We've got to get at it!" growled Johnny Bull. "I don't say we're likely to succeed if Ferrers Locke has failed. That's rot! But there's a sporting chance of doing something. And if we get it in the neck we'll take our chance. Sink or swim together was always our motto."

"Right!" said Frank, and a gleam came into his eyes. "We can't wait here for ever—Locke wouldn't expect that. He wouldn't expect us to leave China, leaving Wharton and Bob in the hands of that scoundrel—and Bunter, too. But what can we do, old chap?"

"Something!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Pan-shan is more than a hundred miles inland. Tang Wang is cock of the walk there. We don't even speak Chinese. It's a big order."

"I'm going!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "They can cut me to pieces if they like, blow 'em, but I'm going to have a shot at helping our pals."

"I'm game," said Nugent, "and so is Inky."

"The gamefulness is terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"There's one thing," said Johnny Bull. "Those brutes won't be expecting anything of the kind. Tang Wang would never dream that we should have the nerve to follow our friends into Kwang-si."

"That's so; but every Chinaman on the road would notice three foreign devils—"

"I've been thinking of that! Ferrers Locke has gone into Kwang-si, in the disguise of a Chinese beggar. We can't play that game like Locke, but we can shove on some sort of a cover. We can make ourselves look Chinese enough to pass muster."

"The first man who spoke to us on the road would spot us!" said Nugent, shaking his head.

"More ways than one of killing a cat!" retorted Johnny Bull. "I've been asking questions about the country. Pan-shan is on a canal that runs into the West River—lots of the trade down from the interior comes by water—half the travelling in this country is done by river and canal. What price going up the river in a sampan and getting into Pan-shan by way of the canal?"

Nugent whistled.

"My esteemed Johnny," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"On the river we could keep out of the way of questions," said Johnny. "We mightn't hit trouble till we reach Pan-shan."

"Then we should hit it hard!" said Nugent dryly.

"Who cares?" growled Johnny Bull.

"If we could take a fellow with us

who spoke Chinese!" muttered Nugent. "If Wun Lung would come along—"

"Can't ask him!" said Johnny Bull, shaking his head. "Old Mr. Wun and his grandfather, old Ko, wouldn't hear of it. It was to keep Wun Lung safe that we all came out to China, and we can't ask him to put his head into the tiger's mouth now he's got safe home."

"That's so! But—"

"We've got to try it on."

"It's no good trying it on without somebody who speaks the language along with us," said Frank. "Perhaps Mr. Wun can find us somebody who can be trusted."

"He will have to find somebody who's willing to risk having his head cut off!" said Johnny Bull. "He certainly won't trust Wun Lung outside the walls of his house, and if he would, Grandfather Ko wouldn't, and it's the jolly old grandfather who rules the roost here. But— Oh, here's the kid."

Wun Lung came into the ko-tang with his soft footsteps.

The Chinese junior of Greyfriars was looking far from his usual cheery self.

His chums had seen him safe through many dangers, and landed him alive and well in the house of Wun Chung Lung. But it seemed that three of the Greyfriars fellows were to pay with their lives for their success in keeping Wun Lung safe from the clutches of the Red Dragon Tong. And the thoughts of the little Chinese were with his friends in far-off Kwang-si, in the power of the mandarin.

"Any news?" asked Nugent eagerly, as the Chinese junior joined them.

"Anything from Ferrers Locke?"

"No news, friend Flanky," answered Wun Lung. "But messenger come, Som Tang Wang, talkee along father."

"A messenger from Tang Wang?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "What does he want?"

Wun Lung smiled faintly.

"Askee ransom."

"A ransom?"

"Yea! Fifty thousand silver shoes for our three Siends."

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank. "Fifty thousand ounces of silver! The villain's asking enough."

"What answer has your father given?" asked Johnny Bull.

The little Chinese smiled again.

"He telles messenger he must consulte Fellers Locke! He say he sendes to Hong Kong, askee Fellers Locke."

"But Ferrers Locke isn't at Hong Kong," said Frank, puzzled. "Mr. Locke has gone into Kwang-si."

"Velly true; but no telles Tang Wang so," answered Wun Lung. "Telles Tang Wang plenty big lie."

"Oh!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Messenger come again after three day," said Wun Lung.

"You think Tang Wang will wait three days for an answer?"

"Waites plenty! Nobody in hully along China," answered Wun Lung.

"Plenty times in this country."

The juniors had already learned that they were in a land of leisurely slowness. Nobody in China was in a hurry. Life went on at the same easy pace as for the past twenty-five centuries.

"Talkee plenty makes loose plenty time," said Wun Lung. "Chinese way, plenty muchee talkee."

Nugent smiled a little. He knew that negotiations were always long-drawn-out in China. Tang Wang would probably expect his negotiations with the Canton merchant to take up time.

"But if your father pays the ransom—"

"he said."

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"Tang Wang killy prisoner, allee samee! He plenty muchee fierce along his son Tang Lao killed. He takes ransom, killy prisoner allee samee."

"Then your father won't pay!"

"No payee. Only takee muchee timee, takee all timee can," said Wun Lung. "All timee takee, prisoners no killy."

Nugent sighed. He had no doubt that the revengeful mandarin had no intention of releasing the prisoners. He would extract their ransom if he could; and then he would send the heads of the prisoners to Mr. Wun. His chief object in ordering the kidnapping of the juniors was to draw Ferrers Locke to Pan-shan to their rescue, sure that if the Baker Street detective penetrated into his city, he would fall into the tyrant's power. So much they knew, from the mandarin's own words. The demand for ransom was only a side show, as it were. Probably Tang Wang did not expect to receive the money. But if he received it, the prisoners would not be released. The mandarin's motive in the first place had been greed; but since his son had fallen in the attack on the Greyfriars party on the voyage out to China, vengeance was stronger than greed in his breast.

And Mr. Wun Chung Lung, knowing that a ransom would be paid in vain, would pay nothing; only he intended to draw out the haggling as long as possible, to give Ferrers Locke time to act.

That was all that he could do, and it was something; but it brought little enough hope to the juniors.

Johnny Bull clenched his fists.

"You know the customs of these Chinks!" he said. "Tang Wang will wait a few days—they always expect to jaw a lot, in China. Then if he doesn't get the money, he will send along a finger or an ear to hurry up the payment."

Nugent shuddered.

It was only too possible—only too terribly likely.

"Do you think so, Wun Lung?" he asked.

"Me tinkee!" admitted Wun Lung.

"That settles it," said Nugent. "We're going! I don't care if they cut us to pieces—we're going!"

Wun Lung's almond eyes opened wide.

"You goey along Pan-shan?" he asked.

"Yea."

"You all killy."

"Sink or swim together," said Johnny Bull. "We're going! We'd better tell your father, kid. Where is he?"

"You comey along me," said Wun Lung, and he led the juniors from the ko-tang, and they followed him by halls and passages to the private cabinet of Mr. Wun.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### The Prisoners!

"THE Chinese can cook!" said Billy Bunter.

Bunter had made that remark many times, since the Greyfriars fellows had arrived in the Flowery Land.

There was no doubt that the Chinese could cook. The things they cooked did not always meet with Bunter's approval; he disliked snails and frogs as articles of diet. But the way they cooked was all right—in fact, it was, in Bunter's estimation, "prime."

"I say, you fellows." The Owl of the Remore blinked at his two fellow prisoners. "This is topping! I'm not

sure what it's made of, but it's really ripping—in fact, spiffing!"

And Bunter, having paused for a moment or two, resumed operations on the contents of the bowl resting on his fat knee.

The mandarin's prisoners were evidently not to be starved—at present, at all events. Servants had brought in three bowls of food, under the eye of Mr. O No, with a guard of soldiers standing outside while the door was open. They were left to themselves again immediately.

All three were hungry and thirsty. They drank from the large jug of water that had been placed in the room, and began to eat. Chopsticks had been provided; and the juniors had got rather used to these, in the house of Mr. Wun, at Canton. They were never likely to learn to manage chopsticks in the manner that was considered elegant in China; but they contrived to eat with them. Billy Bunter helped out the chopsticks with his fat fingers.

"It's scrumptious!" he said, with his mouth full. "They call it rice; but it's really a stew! I think there's chicken in it."

Wharton and Bob Cherry preferred

were good fellows among them; and Bunter was willing to acknowledge it—when he was not hungry.

"If this goes on," said Bunter, "all right! I suppose that beast Tang Wang will stick old Wun for a ransom for us! Well, I think he ought to pay it—at least, for me. Considering that I came out to China purely and simply to see his son safe home, he's bound to play up. And he's jolly rich—a few thousand pounds won't hurt him."

"Think you're worth it?" asked Bob, with gentle sarcasm.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, if you're not going to finish your grub, I'll finish it for you. What?"

"Go ahead, fatty!"

Bunter went ahead. It was against Bunter's principles to leave anything eatable uneaten.

He ate and ate! And the more he ate, the more hopeful was the view he took of the situation. How little likely the mandarin was to release them for a ransom, Wharton and Bob knew only too well; but there was no need to add to Bunter's terrors, so they kept their knowledge to themselves. Bunter, fortunately, was not much given to thinking.

Having cleaned out the third bowl, to the last speck of rice, Bunter rose from his stool and yawned.

"I fancy I'll have a nap!" he remarked.

"Go it!" said Bob.

"Don't jaw, you fellows! Keep quiet, you know!"

"Fathead!"

"I think you might have a little consideration," said Bunter. "I'm used to your selfishness, but all the same, you might remember all I've done for you."

"Go to sleep, for goodness' sake," said Harry. "Your snoring is rather better than your chin-wag."

"Yah!"

The only bed in the room was the kang, a raised dais at one end of the room. Three or four mats lay on it. Bunter rolled one up for a pillow, stretched himself on the others, and closed his eyes. A minute more, and a deep snore rumbled through the room.

Bunter, at all events, was able to forget his troubles in sleep.

It was not so easy for his companions to do the same. They were gifted with rather brighter mental powers than William George Bunter.

They stood at the window looking out into the walled garden. The room, like the whole of the great rambling building, was on the ground floor.

The window, like most windows in the interior of China, was of oiled paper, which admitted light, but blurred vision. But several of the paper panes were torn, and through the gaps the juniors were able to look out. Outside the paper panes strong wooden bars protected the window, the spaces between much too small for the slimmest prisoner to crawl out.

"Safe enough here!" said Bob Cherry, with a grimace.

"Looks like it."

"I wonder what the fellows are doing in Canton?"

"Nothing," said Harry. "They know that Mr. Locke followed us, of course, but they can do nothing. I only hope they won't try anything rash and fall into that demon's clutches."

Bob glanced towards the sleeping Owl and lowered his voice.

"What do you think they're going to do with us, old man?"

"Keep us as a bait to draw Ferrers Locke into Tang Wang's hands."

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## A POPULAR PASTIME

for the

## LONG EVENINGS!

Make up a Greyfriars limerick and win a **USEFUL POCKET WALLET**, like—

Joseph Reid, of 23, Stewart's Terrace, Circular Road, Larnoo, Co. Antrim, who has sent in the following effort:

Wun Lung said one day, with a sigh,  
To his little brother Hop Mt:  
"This bad old Tang Wangee  
I wish he would hangee,  
For he wantee to see me die!"

There's heaps more wallets waiting to be won and **YOU** may as well win one!

not to think about that. The hind legs of frogs, much used in Chinese cookery, tasted very much like chicken. But it was no time to be particular. They had to eat.

They felt all the better for the meal, too, which undoubtedly was well cooked, whatever it consisted of. There was a good deal left in two of the bowls, when Wharton and Bob had finished. Bunter was still going on. There was not likely to be anything left in his bowl.

"Glad you like it, old fat man," said Bob.

"It's prime!" said Bunter. "If they give us grub like this, we shan't be so badly off. That man O No doesn't seem a bad sort—lots of Chinese aren't bad sorts, you know. Tang Wang is a frightful beast; but lots of them are all right. I dare say they hate foreigners; but I dare say we should feel the same if a lot of foreigners came and bagged bits of England. What?"

Bunter was evidently in a very reasonable and placable mood—the effect of the excellent contents of the bowl. Until the moment when the food arrived, the Chinese had been a race of heathen blighters who ought to have been exterminated. Now Bunter was prepared to admit that the whole four hundred millions of them were not bad. There



answered Harry. "The brute threatened it when we saw him in Canton. Most likely he will try to stick Mr. Wun for a ransom; but whether a ransom's paid or not, he won't let us go."

"Then our lives are safe till——"

"Till he gets hold of Ferrers Locke, I think—or loses patience," said Harry quietly. "He won't get hold of Mr. Locke in a hurry."

Bob Cherry put his hand through one of the gaps in the paper window and felt the bar outside. It was of some hard wood like oak, almost as hard as iron.

"No getting out of this," he said.

Wharton shook his head.

"It all depends on Locke," he answered.

"That's so."

"We know—though the mandarin doesn't—that he's not far away. But how is he going to find us here?" Wharton shook his head again. "We're up against it, old chap."

"While there's life there's hope," said Bob stoutly.

But, in spite of their courage, the chums of the Remove knew how little hope there was of escaping alive from the power of the mandarin.

In silence they stood watching the shadows deepen in the little walled garden outside their prison.

The sun was sinking in the west, towards far-away Yun-nan and Tibet; shadows lengthened in the garden, and the room grew deeply dusky.

They were thinking of Ferrers Locke, now probably within the walls of Pan-shan, in his disguise of a Chinese beggar-man.

Locke would know that they were imprisoned in the yamen. But how was he to gain admittance within those closely guarded walls? How, if he gained admittance, was he to find the prison-room of the Greyfriars juniors in that rambling warren of a building? How, if he found them, was he to spirit them away from a city swarming with a hostile population, high-walled, guarded at all the gates by soldiers?

The more they thought of it the blacker the prospect seemed, though they would not let despair enter their hearts.

A figure moved across the garden in the thickening dusk—a figure in blue cotton. It was that of a Chinese gardener. The juniors watched him as he let himself out by a gate in the garden wall into a courtyard beyond. The gate closed behind him.

"Way out—if we could get to it," said Bob, with a faint grin.

"We've got to stick it somehow," said Harry.

The darkness deepened, and they did not expect a light to be brought to them. They stretched themselves at last on the kang beside Bunter and closed their eyes. But, weary as they were, it was long before they slept; long they lay wakeful, listening to the steady rumble of Bunter's snore. It was late when at last they slept.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Ferrers Locke in Pan-shan I

A RED lamp burned in the guardhouse over the great eastern gate of Pan-shan.

It was the signal that the gates would soon be closed.

In Pan-shan, as in most Chinese provincial cities, the gates were closed at dark, and not opened again until the

morning. The red lamp burns in the guardhouse, in the falling shadows of evening, as a warning to travellers on the road.

For twenty minutes or half an hour the candle in the red lamp might burn. But it was freshly lighted over the eastern gate when a Chinese beggar-man came prowling along the road, his tattered blue gown fluttering in the evening wind, his bare feet caked with the dirt of the highway, his yellow wrinkled face deep in shadow under the wide bamboo hat. There were a few copper cash in his begging-bowl; and as he came doddering up the road he picked among the garbage with a stick, occasionally transferring some remnant of rubbish to his bag—some fragment of cast-away food that might serve as a beggar's supper.

The soldiers in the gateway grinned at him as he came up. Beggars were plenty in Pan-shan, as in all Chinese cities; but seldom had the guards seen so miserable and forlorn a beggar-man. One of them, with a cruel Oriental playfulness, threw a sharp stone, which struck the old man's begging-bowl, tilted it, and shot a dozen copper cash out into the road.

Then there was loud laughter as the old beggar scrambled in the dust and mud, grabbing greedily after the almost worthless coins.

He gathered them up and came doddering on into the dusky archway of the gate, amid the mockery of the soldiers.

So far from resenting the upsetting of his bowl, the old beggar kow-towed to the ground in respect to the guard.

"Old man, you seem to have travelled far," said the soldier who had knocked over the bowl.

"O brave soldier, born many centuries before me, I am Hung, the son of Shing, the cobbler, and I have travelled even from the far country of Shantung," answered the beggar. "For I was born in the far north, even in the shadow of the Great Wall."

"Well I know that you travel from a distant province, old frog!" jeered the soldier. "For you do not speak with the tongue of the south."

"It is true, O born-before-me," said the beggar. "And even from far Shantung I have come to beg food from the generous-hearted ones of Kwang-si."

There was a chuckle from the Chinese soldiers. The old man spoke Chinese, but not exactly as it was spoken in the province of Kwang-si. And, like most people, the Kwang-si men were amused by an accent that was unlike their own.

The difference was fully explained by the fact that Hung came from a province so far to the north as Shantung. It certainly did not occur to the Pan-shan guards that the difference might have been still more accurately accounted for by the fact that the beggar-man came from a place much farther off than the Great Wall of China—as far off as Baker Street, in the greatest city of the West.

"Even from the banks of the Hoang-ho have I come. O born-many-centuries-before me," said Hung.

And the soldiers laughed again. For in the south of China a river is called "kiang"; "ho" being the word used in the north.

"The blessing of Kwan, the Goddess of Mercy, falls upon the noble ones who are generous to the poor," whined the old beggar, and he extended the bamboo bowl.

The soldiers, put into a good humour by their mockery of the old man's talk, tossed a few copper cash into the bowl; and the beggar-man passed on into the city.

Once through the gateway, the heart of Hung, the son of Shing, the cobbler, of Shantung, beat a little faster. Ferrers Locke was safely within the city of the Mandarin Tang Wang.

The soldiers, laughing, watched him dodder along the street, picking among the plentiful garbage with his stick, little dreaming that under the tattered blue gown and the yellow wrinkled skin a foreign devil was hidden.

The street from the gate ran for some distance along the bank of the canal; and the beggar-man, as he seemed to seek among the garbage for fragments still eatable, was taking a keen and careful survey of his surroundings.

Along the bank of the canal innumerable sampans and many houseboats were moored—some close to the bank, others farther out in the stream. And more sampans were coming in through the water-gate, the Chinese coolies on board them poling with unusual haste; for when the gates were closed at dark an iron grille was let down across the canal, and once the gates were closed and the grille down, there was no more entering of the city until the morning. Any boatman who arrived too late had to pass the night outside the walls—not an attractive prospect in a country swarming with robbers and river pirates and wandering bands of plundering soldiers.

Picking among the garbage, apparently intent only on the miserable fragments he transferred to the bag at his girdle, Hung, the beggar, lost nothing that was to be observed.

Slowly he made his way up the street, and passed out of sight of the soldiers at the gate. And a little later the red candle in the guardhouse over the gate burned out; and then the gates—great wooden masses clamped with iron—crashed shut, and bars and chains rolled into place, securing them for the night.

Darkness was now falling thickly.

Here and there, a dim oil lamp, or a glimmering lantern, lighted the street—all the street lighting there was in Pan-shan.

The air was thick with the fumes of incense-sticks, burning at the doorways, as was customary at nightfall, in honour of the household gods.

Every now and then the beggar from Shantung extended his bowl, and whined for alms; sometimes receiving a few copper cash, sometimes a gift of food from some charitable Chinaman.

He came at last in sight of the mandarin's yamen, which stood in an open square, the only open place in all the city.

The beggar-man did not venture to approach near to the magnificent residence of the great Tang Wang.

He observed it from a distance, occasionally extending his begging-bowl to a passer-by to keep up his appearance of a mendicant. Through the gateway of the yamen he could see many soldiers and serving-men in the great courtyard. Far back from the gateway was the grand entrance of the mansion, with an immense carved copper devil-screen, or spirit-wall, before it.

The beggar-man moved away, threading narrow streets, dimly-lighted—or not lighted at all—till he was in the rear of the mandarin's residence.

Here there were high garden walls, over some of which branches dropped from the trees within.

Ferrers Locke moved slowly along the high wall, roofed at the top with slanting tiles, like most Chinese walls.

He stopped at a gate of solid teak



boards, clamped with iron. It was set in the thickness of the wall—two feet thick at least. It was not a large gate, being evidently one of the less important exits from the place, of which there were probably more than a dozen in all.

Close by the gate he spread his ragged mat, and settled down on it, his head resting on his bag of garbage.

Footsteps came along in the dusk; several passers-by glanced at the dirty, ragged old man, with his unkempt beard, as they passed. But there was nothing unusual in the sight of a tattered beggar sleeping in the lee of a garden wall, and no one paid him any special heed.

But suddenly, with a clatter, the gate opened, and a Chinaman in rich attire emerged. He almost stumbled over the beggar, and stopped with an angry exclamation. A servant, who followed him, kicked the old beggar roughly in the ribs.

Hang, the beggar, started up, as if from sleep, and kow-towed to the ground before the richly-dressed Chinaman.

"O great lord, born many years before this humble slave, have pity on the poor!" he whined—and his begging-bowl came forward. "I am Hung, a miserable one of Shantung, O magnificent greatness!"

A fat face with horn-rimmed spectacles looked down at him in the dusk. It was Mr. O No.

"Wretched frog, do you sleep under the walls of the great and jade-like Mandarin Tang Wang!" exclaimed O No. "Take yourself away, and be thankful that you are not beaten by the sticks of the soldiers."

"Great and noble one, many centuries old, give of your abundance to one who has travelled even from the shadow of the Great Wall in the North!" whined the beggar.

O No spoke to his servant, who threw a handful of copper cash into the bowl.

"Now go, and come here no more, miserable one!" said O No.

Hung the beggar burst into a torrent of thanks. He compared Mr. O No to the sun, and the moon, and all the stars in all the constellations; and expressed a fervent wish that he might be blessed with five hundred wives and twice as many sons. Then he doddered off and disappeared into the shadows, and O No and his servant went their way.

After they were gone, the tattered figure of the beggar-man cautiously approached the gate again, and his hand glided over it softly. But it was fast; it had been fastened within after the departure of O No and his follower. And Ferrers Locke, retiring to a

respectful distance, laid down once more on his sleeping-mat—though not to sleep.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### A Chinese Execution I

**H**ARRY WHARTON opened his eyes at the scraping of a bolt. The door was flung open, and the morning sunlight streamed into the room. The captain of the Greyfriars Remove sat up on the matting on the kang and blinked. Bob Cherry awakened a moment later. Bunter snored on. It required more than the opening of a door to awaken Billy Bunter.

Mr. O No stood in the doorway, looking more richly-dressed and decorative than ever in the bright sunshine.

off. Indeed, he might have been likened to Byron's pirate, who was "the mildest-mannered man that ever cut a throat."

"You like, perhaps, to walk in a garden for a short time?" said Mr. O No. "For half of one hour you may walk, if it please you."

"Thank you, Mr. O!" said Harry Wharton, with real gratitude. "That's awfully decent of you."

The prospect of remaining perpetually in the stuffy room was very dismaying to Wharton and Bob, though Bunter did not worry about it. A walk in the open air, even for half an hour, was a boon and a blessing. And they could guess that they owed it to Mr. O himself, not to any instructions from his master, Tang Wang.

"You may, if like, bathe in pool!"



Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Billy Bunter plunged into the little pool, while six soldiers with drawn swords watched them, with orders to cut off their ears if the juniors tried to escape!

Indeed, it seemed to Wharton that, in his silken coats and petticoats, of more hues than Joseph's celebrated coat, Mr. O No had just stepped off a jar, or a Chinese tea-chest. He had rather the look of a gorgeous butterfly fluttering in the doorway—though rather a substantial butterfly.

Behind him were several Chinese soldiers and a couple of coolies, whose bare limbs and dingy loin-cloths contrasted with Mr. O No's ample and gorgeous attire.

Wharton and Bob Cherry turned off the kang, and Mr. O No saluted them politely. Though Mr. O shared his master's aversion to foreign devils, he was a very polite Chinaman, and a good-tempered one. He was quite prepared to slice off the heads of the juniors if Tang Wang gave the word, but equally prepared to treat them humanely until their heads were sliced

pursued Mr. O, "for I know that the foreign devils, from your country, like to wash themselves all over."

"Good!" said Bob, with satisfaction.

Next to fresh air, a good wash was what the juniors longed for.

"The soldiers will watch you," said Mr. O. "The orders of my great master, with a countenance like precious jade, are to keep you prisoners and to spare your lives. But if you attempt to escape the soldiers have orders to cut off your ears with their swords. Take care, therefore, honourable ones."

"What-ho!" said Bob, with a grimace.

"Wake the noisy one, who makes so much noise with his estimable nose, and go forth!" said O No.

Bunter was shaken into wakefulness,

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and ceased the noise with his estimable nose. He grumbled angrily.

"Look here, you fellows, what's the good of getting up?" he demanded. "They haven't brought us any grub. I'm going to sleep till the grub comes."

"We've got a chance of a sniff of fresh air," said Bob.

"Oh, blow that!"

"We can get a bathe in a pool!"

"Don't be an ass! I don't need so much washing as you fellows—I'm clean!" said Bunter. "Lemme alone!"

"Fathead! They're going to sweep out the cell!" said Harry. "Get out!"

The two coolies had entered the cell now, evidently to clean it for the day. Bunter grumblingly followed Wharton and Bob out of the room. Six soldiers followed them down a path in the little walled garden, with swords in their hands. They reached a little pool in which water-lilies floated, and gladly stripped and plunged into it—even Bunter deciding, on second thoughts, that he might as well have a wash.

As for attempting to escape, that thought hardly entered their heads. The walls of the garden were twelve feet high, and six soldiers with drawn swords watched them, with orders to cut off their ears if they tried to get away. Such an order was quite enough to prevent any rash attempt.

Mr. O No also kept an eye on them. It appeared that Mr. O was the special official assigned by the mandarin to keep watch on the prisoners, and there was little doubt that if they had escaped Mr. O's head would have paid the forfeit. The juniors remembered how Chong Lo had been decapitated by order of the mandarin for that reason. It was certain that Mr. O's head also would have parted company with his shoulders had the prisoners got away. Such a prospect was enough to make a gaoler very watchful and very careful.

Having bathed and dried themselves, the juniors resumed their clothes, and were allowed to walk up and down the garden path till the half-hour had elapsed. Then they were taken back to the cell.

By that time the two coolies had done the cleaning, such as it was, and bowls of rice and a jug of water had been brought.

The Greyfriars fellows were shut in again. But as Mr. O left them he gave them the information that they were to see the mandarin that day.

Then the door was bolted once more.

In spite of their almost hopeless position, and the perilous prospect before them, Wharton and Bob were feeling in much better spirits now. After a long night's rest they had recovered from their fatigue, and the plunge in the pool had done them worlds of good. Billy Bunter, who was far from realising the seriousness of the position, was quite chirpy. Bunter ate his bowl of rice, and some sweet, sticky cakes which had been left also. He ate all the cakes while Wharton and Bob were finishing their rice.

Breakfast over, Bunter stretched himself on the kang, and Wharton and Bob posted themselves at the window, looking out through the slits in the oiled paper panes. They were a little apprehensive of the interview with the mandarin, but at the same time felt that almost anything was welcome to break the monotony of their imprisonment.

"Here they come!" said Bob at last.

It was late in the morning when O No appeared, with his usual guard of soldiers. The three prisoners were taken

out of the cell, surrounded by soldiers, and marched away.

"You are to see the mandarin!" said O No. "I give you friendly advice to guard well your tongues, and not to dispute with his magnificent greatness. If you should anger him, he may command your heads to be struck off, or that you may be loaded with chains and placed in a deep dungeon when you will lie in water up to your necks."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Thanks for the tip! I'm going to put my very best manners on."

"It is the will of the mandarin," continued O No, "that you look upon the execution of criminals before you enter the yamen."

"Why?" exclaimed Wharton, with a shudder.

"I think perhaps to strike you with the terror which it is proper for foreign devils to feel in the shadow of the greatness of Tang Wang," answered Mr. O calmly.

It was, of course, futile to raise objections, and the juniors followed Mr. O, surrounded by the soldiers.

They were led by many gardens and passages and courtyards, to an open space blocked in by high bare walls.

This, evidently, was the execution-ground of Pan-chen.

O No made a sign, and the soldiers halted, with the three juniors standing in a row, facing the open space from the gateway by which they had entered.

In a corner of the bare yard, six or seven men, each with a gigantic wooden collar about his neck—a collar of great weight, two or three inches thick, and more than a yard square—were chained together.

"That is the cangue," said Mr. O No. "These men are thieves, and they are punished thus by the justice of Tang Wang."

Thieves as the wretched victims might be, the juniors could not help giving them pitying looks. The cangue was of such weight as to burden its wearer severely, and its extent prevented them from getting their hands to their mouths, so that they had to be fed by a gaoler. Chinese punishments do not err on the side of mercy.

But the attention of the Greyfriars juniors was soon taken off the wretches in the cangue. A number of soldiers entered the execution yard by another gate, leading in four prisoners whose hands were bound behind their backs.

The wild, shaggy looks of the prisoners indicated that they were mountain bandits, and several of them had wounds that had evidently received no attention.

They were placed in a row, their heads bent forward.

A man of great stature, clad only in a loin-cloth, followed them into the yard, carrying a huge, bare sword.

This, evidently, was the executioner.

With his thumb he tested the edge of the heavy sword, which was of razor-like sharpness.

The juniors turned their faces away. They knew what was coming, and it sickened them with horror.

"Look!" said O No.

And as the juniors did not heed him, they were seized by the guards, and forced to look towards the scene.

"It is the order of the mandarin!" said O No. "Is it for foreign devils to disobey the order of the great and pearl-like one?"

Bunter closed his eyes behind his big spectacles. The prick of a dagger caused him to open them again with a yelp.

"Look!" repeated O No.

And the juniors had to look.

The gigantic executioner approached the row of hapless bandits, who stood like statues with their heads bent forward for the stroke. The silent impassivity with which they met their fate was strange enough to the eye of the juniors, much as they had heard of Oriental fatalism.

The great sword was lifted in both the executioner's hands, and it came down like a flash of light, and a head rolled in the sand.

He passed on to the next wretch, and there was another flash of the descending blade, and another head rolled and bounced.

Another, and another, and the execution was over. The Greyfriars juniors stood, almost physically sick with horror and disgust.

No doubt the victims were savage bandits, probably with blood on their hands. And decapitation, after all, was a more merciful death than hanging. But the unwilling spectators were chilled with horror to the very marrow of their bones, and their faces were white and sick as they followed O No from the execution yard.

O No glanced at them, with a faint smile. In China life is cheap, and a Chinese can look on blood and death with a good deal of indifference. The white horror in the faces of the juniors only added to Mr. O's contempt for foreign devils.

But if Tang Wang had intended the sight to strike terror to the hearts of his prisoners, he had not quite succeeded. It was horror, not terror, that Wharton and Bob Cherry were feeling, and mingled with it was a bitter animosity towards the tyrant who had forced them to witness such a fearful scene.

But, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned, the mandarin's object had certainly been effected. Bunter was almost paralysed with fear, and his fat knees knocked together as he staggered away, his eyes bulged behind his spectacles as if starting out of his head, and his hands shook like the leaves of the aspen. The hapless Owl was so overcome that one of the soldiers had to grasp him by the arm and help him along, or he would have fallen.

"Pull yourself together, old chap!" whispered Harry, as they approached the entrance of the yamen.

Bunter only groaned.

"Buck up, Bunter!" said Bob.

The fat junior groaned again.

And he was still tottering when the prisoners and their guard entered the great hall of the yamen.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Before the Mandarin!

**T**ANG WANG, the mandarin, sat on a throne-like gilded seat on the dais at the upper end of the hall. He was clad so gorgeously that even Mr. O No paled into insignificance in comparison. How many silken coats the mandarin wore it was difficult to say, of different lengths and different colours. He blazed like some tropical beetle, with coloured silks and flashing jewels. A collar of pearls, worth many thousand silver "shoes," circled his neck. Rubies and diamonds blazed all over him, even on his shoes.

Magnificence of this sort was impressive to the Chinese eye; but it would have made the Greyfriars fellows smile in less perilous circumstances. The idea of a man "dressing up" was absurd to their minds, and the most over-dressed

(Continued on page 12.)



# "Half-Time" Gossip!



Don't scratch your head till your hair comes out. If you're in doubt over any soccer problem, "Old Ref" will help you out. Try him and see!

**T**HOSE football referees do catch it, to be sure. About half the letters I receive each week tell me that the referee in this or that match made mistakes which affected the result of the game.

Perhaps, after all, this is not surprising. It is not even surprising that referees of football matches do make mistakes, because they frequently have decisions to make on the spur of the moment over which it is easy to go wrong. Take a case in point, and I am quoting from a letter just to hand from a Doncaster reader of the *MAGNET*.

"Playing in a match last week it seemed to me that we were robbed of a goal by the action of the referee who did not give us a penalty kick though he admitted that one of our players was fouled in the penalty area.

*The excuse of the referee was that although our centre-forward was fouled, he recovered, and the referee thought that he would score a goal.*

He didn't, so we got neither goal nor penalty kick. Surely," winds up my good reader, "this wasn't fair."

I am not going to be one little bit cross with my correspondent because of this particular grumble about the action of the referee, but perhaps it will be of general interest if I explain the difficulty which faces a referee on such occasions. I also have to uphold the action of the referee, because it was good according to the official rules.

**I**T is laid down in the instructions to referees that they are not expected to stop the play for any infringement when a stoppage may be of benefit to the side which broke the rules. Now let us "reconstruct the crime," as the Scotland Yard people say. The centre-forward was going through, and was in the penalty area. He was fouled, without a doubt, but not so badly fouled as to prevent him from eluding the full-back who had fouled him and running on to goal.

The referee, obviously watchful, noticed the foul, but also noticed that the player recovered from the trip in such a way that he had a good chance of scoring. The fact that the player who was fouled did not score was not the fault of the referee. If, in those circumstances, the referee had stopped the play he would have run a distinct risk of benefiting the offending side, and this he refused, quite rightly, to do.

**Y**OU see the difficulty of the position from the point of view of the man with the whistle, don't you? He had to decide on the instant whether to blow or to refrain from blowing. He took the option of refraining, which, as it happened worked out badly for the side against whom the defence had been committed.

What my Doncaster reader wants to know, at the end of his question is why, when the player who had been fouled but allowed to go on did not score, the referee did not then award the side a penalty kick? There is an easy answer to that. He could not do so according to rule.

*Once the power to refrain had been exercised, the official could not give a side a second chance.*

Nor would it be fair if he were allowed to do so. It was all very unfortunate, of course, but I cannot possibly see a way of framing the rules of the game so that no hard cases can possibly arise. There is a legal axiom to the effect that hard cases make good law, and this may be applied to football. Certainly in this game it does not follow that because there are hard cases, cases when proper punishment is not meted out to the offending side, that the laws are consequently bad.

I have seen the power to refrain exercised on many occasions on the football field with quite satisfactory results, but the trouble is that so far as the players and oft-times the spectators are concerned, the action of the poor referee, placed in a difficult position, is judged by results.

**O**FFSIDE questions continue to crop up, and I have a drawer full of diagrams sent to me from various readers. I have answered many of these questions direct to the readers concerned, but glancing at my post-bag this week it seems as though there is one aspect of the offside rule which requires general explanation for the benefit of a goodly number of readers.

Everybody connected with football should bear in mind that it is not an offence against the rules for a player to be in an offside position. The game must not be stopped merely because a player is standing behind both full-backs. He is in an offside position,

*but should only be given offside when he makes some move to interfere with the play.*

And the question of when a player is interfering is one which can only be decided by the merits of each individual case.

I should like it to be understood that a player in an offside position might possibly be deemed as having interfered with the play although he has made no movement at all. Let us suppose that the outside-right is standing in an offside position. The ball is kicked in his direction, but it also goes within reach of a defender. That defender, thinking there will be danger to his goal if the ball is allowed to travel on to the outside-right, makes a desperate effort to prevent it from doing so. He just manages to touch the ball, but not to stop its progress, and it goes to the outside-right. Normally, a player is onside when the ball comes to him from an opponent, but I should certainly interpret this as an offside case. In my view the outside-right was interfering with the play because his presence in an offside position caused the defender to make that desperate effort to prevent the ball going to him.

A curious case of "interference" came before my notice, in a game I watched this season. An attacker was hurt, and went down almost on the goal-line. The play was carried on; the ball was worked away, but sent back into the net while the attacker was still lying practically on the goal-line. The referee decided, and quite correctly, that the presence of the injured player on the goal-line affected the movements of the goalkeeper. Therefore, the referee gave the forward offside, although he was lying hurt and making no effort to play the ball. He was "interfering."

**N**OW for a query on the personal side. It comes from Sheffield, and this is it:

*How many cases are there on record of two brothers playing at full-back for the same side in first-class football?*

I am not sure whether I can give a really definite answer to this question, but I will give the instances which I recall. Away in the long ago days—further back than you or I can remember—the brothers A. M. and P. M. Walters played for the Old Carthusians, an amateur side which was one of the best in the land before professionalism came into football.

Then some little time ago Everton had two brothers—W. and R. Balmer, playing as full-backs in their League team, and they were quite good full-backs, too. On top of these cases—they are the only ones I can remember from the past—there are two brothers now playing as full-back partners in first-class football. These are John and George Muburn, the defenders of Leeds United.

They are young lads from Ashington, and their combined ages do not amount to more than forty. They are shaping very well, too, these lads, and the day may come when they will play together as the full-back partners for England, as did the Walters brothers for England on many occasions. Here's luck to the Muburns at full-back.

"OLD REF."

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## THE CITY OF DEATH!

(Continued from page 10.)

women in Europe was not so overdressed as the mandarins of Pan-shan.

Guards and officials surrounded the great man. It seemed as if Tang Wang kept a semi-royal state in his city.

For Tang Wang was not merely a mandarin, with the right to wear the mandarin's button. He was also a descendant of the Ming, who had reigned in China before the Manchus came.

Now that the Manchus—or Ching dynasty—had disappeared from China there were many Chinese whose thoughts turned to a restoration of the Ming dynasty; and there were many of the descendants of the Ming still living, and Wang was one of them.

It was only a few centuries since the Manchus had come into China as conquerors, displacing the Ming; and in the long history of China a few centuries amounted to little.

There had always been a party in China whose watchword was, "Turn out the Ching, bring back the Ming." And now, with the Ching line gone for ever and the whole country in the throes of revolution and civil war, Tang Wang saw, or thought he saw, his chance.

It was for that reason that Tang Wang, chief of the Red Dragon Tong, used the terror of the tong to extract money from rich merchants and other wealthy Chinese; to fill his war-chest for the attempt to place himself on the vacant throne.

In his own territory he was master of the lives and fortunes of all, but his own territory was only a small part of the province of Kwang-si.

But the agents of the Red Dragon Tong were spread through other provinces of the south, and it was from rich merchants of Canton and Hong Kong that the tong extracted contributions under threats.

Mr. Wun Chung Lung had resisted the demand, and Tang Wang had ordered the death of his son, Wun Lung, to bring him to reason.

In far-off England his agents had attempted to carry out his orders; and all the way home to China, Wun Lung's life had been threatened, but Ferrers Locke had saved him and brought him safe to his father's house. And in the attacks on the Greyfriars party, the mandarin's son, Tang Lao, had fallen. Hence the mandarin's savage desire to get the Baker Street detective into his power.

The mandarin's ivory-yellow face was almost expressionless as the three Greyfriars juniors were brought into the hall, and his slanting, black eyes fixed on them. Only the black eyes gleamed with such a gleam as might have come into the eyes of a tiger.

Towards the juniors his feelings were almost of indifference. They were a bait to draw Ferrers Locke into his power and to extract "silver shoes" from Mr. Wun.

Apart from that, he cared nothing about them; though it was his fixed intention to put them to death when they could no longer serve any useful purpose. They were "foreign devils," and to kill all foreigners, or drive them out of China, was a part of the mandarin's programme. There was a mixture of fanatical patriotism in the unscrupulous villainy of the mandarin.

Between lines of guards the three juniors advanced up the hall. Mr. O No had an anxious expression on his fat

face. Half-way up the hall he whispered in an agitated tone to the prisoners.

"Here you kow-tow; it is customary to kow-tow to his great magnificence! Do not anger him if you value your lives!"

Bob Cherry grunted, and Wharton's jaw jutted obstinately. They were not going to crawl at the feet of a Chink.

"Will you ask for torture and death?" breathed O No.

"I—I say, I—I don't mind kow-towing!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I'll kow-tow, or anything you like. I—I'll stand on my head if you like."

"Follow me, and do as I do, if you would live!" whispered O No.

He advanced up the hall bent almost double, and as he arrived near the great and magnificent one, he kow-towed to the floor, touching it with his forehead.

The juniors followed him, Wharton and Bob constraining themselves to bow their heads in salutation; though they felt that nothing would induce them to humble themselves to the dust before the Chinaman.

Bunter had no such scruples.

He endeavoured to kow-tow in the manner of O No.

Kow-towing, however, requires the loose garments of a Chinese to be carried out effectively. It is a form of "physical jerks" not compatible with European clothes.

Billy Bunter bent over, and his face assumed the hue of a freshly-boiled lobster. There was a "ping" as one of Bunter's buttons went.

He dropped on his fat knees, tapped the floor with his forehead, lost his balance, and rolled over at the mandarin's feet.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He sat up dizzily, clutched at his spectacles, and set them straight on his fat nose, and spluttered wildly.

"Groogh! I say—Ow! Oh crikey! Ow!"

The hard face of the mandarin was wrinkled in a grin. There were grins on all the yellow faces in the crowded hall.

Bunter's antics had rather broken up the gravity of the assembly.

"You fat idiot!" gasped Bob.

"Ow! Oht Groogh! Oh dear!"

"O magnificent nobleness, these miserable foreign devils do not know how to behave in your god-like presence!" said O No, still flat on the floor till he received a sign to rise.

"Are they not senseless brutes, like all the barbarians of the West?" said Tang Wang indifferently.

Bunter scrambled up.

"I—I say, sir, I—I'll do it again, if you like!" he gasped. "I—I don't mind tow-towing; I—I rather like it."

"Silence, fool!" said the mandarin, in English.

Apparently the mandarin had had enough of Bunter's acrobatic performances. He signed to O No to rise and step back out of hearing. The three juniors were left facing the mandarin. Guards surrounded them, but these understood no English. O No backed away far enough to make it clear that he could hear nothing. The mandarin did not desire to be overheard.

Tang Wang fixed his hard, black eyes on the Greyfriars fellows. If he desired to see them tremble, Bunter, at least, satisfied him, for the Owl of the Remorse was trembling from head to foot.

"Foreign dogs!" said Tang Wang.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"You can call us what you like!" he said. "We're in your power."

"That is a truth-aying!" said Tang Wang. "Here in Pan-shan I am lord, as shortly I shall be in all China. At the

lifting of my finger your heads may be struck from your shoulders."

"We know it!" said Harry quietly.

He constrained himself to speak quietly and civilly. It was no time to tell this Chink what he thought of him.

"Where is the white devil Ferrers Locke?"

"How can we tell where Ferrers Locke is, when we are prisoners in your hands?" answered Wharton.

The black eyes glittered.

"That is all I desire," said Tang Wang. "You think not that the foreign devil Locke will take ship at Hong Kong and flee from my vengeance?"

Wharton smiled contemptuously.

"Certainly not!" he answered.

"Yet my messenger, who had spoken to Wun Chung Lung at Canton, has returned to say that the foreign devil is at Hong Kong!" said Tang Wang, eyeing Wharton sharply.

Wharton started.

He knew that Locke, in the guise of Hung, the beggar-man, had followed them; he had little doubt that the Baker Street detective was even then within the walls of Pan-shan. His start of surprise did not escape the mandarin's keen eyes.

"You are surprised to hear this?" asked Tang Wang.

Wharton realised that he had to answer carefully.

"I am surprised to hear that Ferrers Locke is at Hong Kong," he said. "If he is there, I knew nothing of it, and never guessed it. But I am certain that he has not gone there to take ship away from China. That is impossible while we are your prisoners."

"Perhaps he is there to seek the help of other foreign devils to save you?" said Tang Wang, with a sarcastic smile.

"I know nothing of it," said Harry.

"Let him seek," said the mandarin.

"All the foreign devils in China cannot save you. Times are changed since an army of foreign devils marched on Peking, and humbled the god-like emperor on his peacock throne. No foreign army will ever march into China again. When we were weak they invaded us and plundered us. Now we are strong, they talk to us with a civil tongue, for they know that if a foreign army marched into China now it would never see the shore of the ocean again."

Wharton made no reply to that.

There was, in fact, a good deal of truth in what the mandarin said. China, so long the helpless prey of foreigners, on the verge of being partitioned by half a dozen European powers, had been driven into awakening from her centuries-long lethargy. Thirty years ago a European army had marched on Peking, burning and plundering. Changeless China had changed, since then, in at least one respect, such a performance was never to be repeated.

"Let him come with all the foreign devils who can help him!" said Tang Wang. "They will find their death in this province of Kwang-si."

Wharton was careful not to let his face betray the satisfaction he felt.

The mandarin evidently believed that Ferrers Locke was seeking to obtain force to rescue the prisoners of Pan-shan with the strong hand.

Such a project was utterly hopeless, and Wharton knew that Locke would not even think of it.

But so long as the mandarin believed so, he was less likely to suspect that the Baker Street detective, in disguise, was already in the city.

"Let him come!" repeated Tang





In an endeavour to *kow-tow* to the great and magnificent one, Billy Bunter dropped on his fat knees, tapped the floor with his forehead, lost his balance, and rolled over at the mandarin's feet!



Wang. "It is because I desire him to come that you are here."

"I understand that," said Harry.

"He will come!" said the mandarin, with a cold glitter in his eyes. "I know him well; he will not abandon you. My spies are out on every road, and when he comes I shall rejoice. You are the bait that shall draw him into a death-trap."

Wharton was silent. Bob Cherry said nothing, leaving the talking to his chum. As for Billy Bunter, his teeth were chattering so fast, that it was doubtful whether he could have talked at all.

"You are friends of the son of Wun Chung Lung?" said the mandarin, changing the subject abruptly.

"Yes," said Harry. "We were his friends at school in England."

"Wun Chung Lung will pay ransom for your lives?"

"I—I think he would; if he was sure that we should be sent safe back to Canton."

The mandarin smiled.

"You do not think he would pay the ransom first?"

"Mr. Wun is a business man," answered Wharton. "He will not pay money for nothing."

"But if I send him your ears to remind him that I grow impatient for the ransom?" asked the mandarin. "An ear from each head?"

Wharton shuddered.

"That is the Chinese way!" said the mandarin softly. "Mr. Wun has asked for three days to consult the foreign devil Locke who is now in Hong Kong. For three days I shall wait; but after

three days, if the money is not paid your ears will be delivered to Mr. Wun in a porter's basket."

"We are in your power!" said Harry, in a low voice.

"And after," said Tang Wang, "if the money is not yet paid your other ears will be delivered to Mr. Wun. That is the Chinese way."

Wharton stood silent. His face had whitened; and Bob Cherry's ruddy cheeks were like chalk. Bunter groaned.

The mandarin made a sign. O No came forward and the juniors were led away. They went in silence, with the perspiration thick on their foreheads. Three days for Ferrers Locke to act—and after that, mutilation that was worse than death!

The juniors were shut in the cell again; Wharton and Bob silent, while Bunter, stretched on the kang in a state of collapse groaned aloud.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Grandfather Ko!

**M**R WUN CHUNG LUNG sat silent on the ebony chair in his private cabinet in his house at Canton and looked through the narrowed slits of his eyes at his guests. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, waited for him to speak.

They had told the merchant their intention, their fixed resolve. There was no news from Ferrers Locke; no news of their missing comrades. They

were going to Pan-shan; to save them or to die with them. On that, their minds were immutably made up, but out of respect for Mr. Wun, their generous host, they had told him and asked his consent.

The merchant was long silent.

Whether he approved or disapproved the juniors could not read in his impassive ivory face. They hoped that he approved, for they did not wish to displease the man who had been kindness itself to them since their arrival in China. But in any case, they were going.

Wun Lung watched his father's face anxiously.

It was to keep him safe that his friends had come to China; it was through him that the prisoners had become the mark for the savage enmity of Tang Wang. And the Chinese junior desired strongly to accompany the Greyfriars fellows on the journey of rescue, wild and desperate as it was. Gratitude is a strong feeling among the Chinese; it is seldom that a Chinaman is ungrateful. But it was for his father, or rather his grandfather, to decide, for filial obedience comes before all else in the Flowery Land. Mr. Wun knew his son's wishes; Wun Lung had to leave it at that.

Mr. Wun Chung Lung spoke at last. "If you go, you go to your death, honourable-ones-born-before-me!" he said.

"I know it's likely," said Frank Nugent. "But we shan't be in any

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(Continued from page 13.)

greater danger than the fellows that Tang Wang's got hold of."

"That is a truth-saying!" admitted Mr. Wun. "Yet I think that the lord Locke would desire me to keep you safe in my house till his return."

"He may never return."

"That is only too true!" said Mr. Wun gravely. "And it is possible that, in Chinese guise, you may reach Pan-shan by river and canal if someone with you speaks the language. But at Pan-shan it is death to enter the walls."

"We're not afraid!" said Johnny Bull sturdily. "They shall cut us to pieces before we'll leave China without our friends."

Mr. Wun evidently approved that sentiment. Loyalty is a thing that a Chinaman can understand.

"If you could find us some boatmen who could be trusted and who would not be afraid to enter Pan-shan—" began Nugent.

"Many faithful men I have in my service," said Mr. Wun. "But to enter Pan-shan with disguised foreigners is the way to death by torture. Also the spies of the mandarin are many; and there may be some in my household."

Nugent was silent.

"But," went on Mr. Wun softly, "my life and my son's life belong to my friends who are in danger for my son's sake. A Chinese does not forget such a debt. If it were for me to say, I should command my Little Pink Toad to go with you."

The juniors smiled. "Little Pink Toad" was Wun Lung's "milk-name"; the name by which he was called in his family. It had struck them as a weird pet name when they had first heard it.

"But it is not for me to say," went on Mr. Wun gravely. "Yet I will kneel at my father's feet and beg this favour of him for the sake of gratitude and friendship to my friends."

He rose, and signed to the school-boys to follow him.

They followed him to the apartments of Mr. Wun Ko—Grandfather Ko, the autocrat of the Wun establishment.

There was something odd, to an English mind, in a man turned fifty being unable to decide such a matter without asking the consent of his father; but it evidently did not even occur to Mr. Wun that it was possible for him to decide on his own responsibility.

Odd as it was, the juniors could not help feeling that there was something admirable in Chinese piety. Neglect of aged parents is so unknown in China, that a Chinese would find it difficult to believe that it occurs anywhere. The Chinese go to the opposite extreme—sometimes to an absurd extreme—but it is a fault on the right side, at least.

Grandfather Ko was seated on a cushion slowly and methodically smoking a long pipe. He looked a little, wizened bunch of humanity, but his

black eyes were still sharp and sparkling. Mr. Wun kow-towed to the floor before his honourable parent; and did not venture to approach near to him till Grandfather Ko signed to him to do so. He was still in a bent and humble attitude when he addressed his aged parent.

He spoke in Chinese—the Chinese of the North; for the Wuns belonged to North China and spoke what is called the "Mandarin" tongue. Grandfather Ko listened quietly.

The juniors watched his little wizened face, wondering what his decision would be. Much depended on it, for if the dangerous expedition had a chance of success, it could only be through Wun Lung going with the juniors.

Since Wun Lung's safe return home, Grandfather Ko had been extremely particular and stern about the "Little Pink Toad." Wun Lung had not once been allowed to take a step outside the walls.

After Mr. Wun had finished speaking, Mr. Wun Ko was silent for some moments.

Then he began to speak in his turn.

His voice was on an angry note, and his old eyes flashed as he talked. He seemed angry, and the juniors supposed that it was due to the suggestion that Wun Lung should go in danger. And indeed, it did not seem likely that Wun Ko, who had refused to allow his grandson to go forth into the crowded streets of Canton would permit him to venture into the clutches of the enemy who had ordered his death.

But they noticed, with surprise, that angry as Mr. Wun Ko's voice sounded, Wun Lung was looking relieved and pleased.

Grandfather Ko ceased to speak, and Mr. Chung Lung bowed his head in humble acquiescence. The grandfather made a gesture towards the juniors, to whom he could not speak himself, evidently directing his son to tell them what he had said.

"I'm sorry we've made the old gentleman angry, sir!" said Frank. "Of course, we quite understand that he doesn't want his grandson to go to Pan-shan with us."

Mr. Wun stared, and Wun Lung smiled.

"That is not the meaning of my honourable and jade-like father," answered Mr. Wun gravely. "Not only does he consent to his grandson going, but he is angered that I should have doubted it."

"Ow!" ejaculated Nugent; and Johnny Bull could only stare. This was far from what they had expected.

"My honourable father does not doubt that Little Pink Toad is going to his death," said Mr. Wun. "But the life of my son belongs to his friends who have risked great dangers for his safety. Could I trust the word of Tang Wang I would ransom the prisoners with the whole of my fortune. But Tang Wang's word I cannot trust, he is not a good Chinese. But if the life of my son can not ransom them, let it be so! Such is the command of my pearl-like father."

Nugent looked at Wun Lung.

"Mo comey," said the Chinese junior in the English that was so unlike his father's. "Mo wanton comey, me likes plenty, too much. Me comes chop-chop!"

And that matter being settled, they retired from the presence of Grandfather Ko.

"Now we've only got to fix up things, and get off!" said Johnny Bull, with a deep sigh of relief, "and with Wun

Lung to talk Chinese for us, we'll jolly well pull through."

"We'll wangle it somehow," said Frank.

"The wanglefulness will be terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

Now that the matter was settled the juniors lost no time.

All the articles they required were carried down to the boathouse on the canal that ran through Mr. Wun's grounds.

A command from Mr. Wun was enough to leave that spot isolated, lest there should be a spy of Tang Wang's in the numerous household.

Mr. Wun's secretary, So Fat, went with them to give them his aid.

The juniors changed their clothes for dingy blue cotton tunics and trousers, their shoes for the padded shoes of the Chinese, their hats for immense bamboo hats such as were worn by the coolies.

Mr. So Fat rubbed a pigment on their skins, changing them to the yellowish hue of the Chinese, assuring them that the colour would remain so long as they did not wash.

The prospect of going unwashed was not particularly attractive, but after all, it was in keeping with the character of river coolies, and the dirtier they became the more effective would be the disguise.

Pigtails they did not need; for there were tens of thousands of Chinese in the province of Kwang-tung who had cut off their queues, or whose queues had been forcibly cut off by the soldiers of the "advanced" faction, always strong in Canton.

When Mr. So Fat had done with them it needed a very close inspection to discern that Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull were not Chinese youths of the coolie class. As for Wun Lung, the change into coolie garb, and a few more artistic touches to his face, sufficiently hid his identity from anyone who knew him by sight.

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh could not be turned into a Chinaman, his dark skin was too likely to wear through the paint. But it was easy enough to give him the appearance of an half-caste; he was not much darker than many of the Portuguese of Macao.

"I do not opine that your own brother would know you in these present moments," Mr. So Fat declared when his work was done. "To the eye of the inquiry you are three Chinese of disreputable class, and a half-caste from the docks of Hong Kong. Yes! let not golden speech flow too readily from your lips, or you English say, the word is mum! So possibly you may live to behold once more the honourable city of Canton."

A sampan was ready, a common looking sampan such as river coolies might be supposed to own. Mr. So Fat had selected the cargo that was piled on the deck. In the little cabin there were sleeping mats. And hidden well out of sight for the present were four revolvers and a supply of cartridges, and the four juniors wore knives in their belts.

Quietly in the dusk of the evening the sampan dropped down the canal and floated into the wide waters of the Che-kiang, lost there among a myriad of sampans, houseboats, and junks.

The night was spent moored among other sampans, and many times they were hailed by the Chinese river-folk, and Wun Lung answered every time. And it was fairly clear that but for the presence of the Chinese junior the disguised crew would have been suspected very soon.

They slept that night on the mats in the cabin or on deck with hundreds of other sampans round them, from many



of which rose the fumes of incense sticks. It was a strange glimpse of the river life of Canton, where thousands of families live permanently on the boats, moored in great clusters along the banks, sometimes as far out as mid-stream.

With the gleam of dawn, the Honourable and Benevolent Crane—for such was the name of the sampan—started on its voyage into the interior of China.

Scores of sampans were going the same way, and there was nothing to distinguish the Honourable and Benevolent Crane from the rest.

Spreading the mat sail when the wind was favourable, poling at other times, the crew of the Crane made their way up the river, and Canton dropped far behind them. River travel is slow in China—the land of leisure. But every passing hour, slow as it seemed, brought the Honourable and Benevolent Crane nearer and nearer to Pan-shan—the city where the prisoners lay in the power of the mandarin; where Ferrers Locke lurked in disguise, if indeed death had not already overtaken him—and where the chances were a hundred to one that grim death awaited the rescuers.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Has an Idea!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Bunter sat up on the kang and groaned.

"Yes, old chap!" said Harry Wharton, gently enough.

"I say, can't we get out of this somehow?"

"I—I hope so!"

"It's up to you fellows!" said Bunter. "Can't you think of something? I say, it's too awfully thick, you know."

Wharton was silent.

He would have been glad enough to encourage the fat Owl, but there was little he could say of hope.

Bunter did not know that Ferrers Locke, in the guise of Hung the beggar, had followed them. It had been on Wharton's lips to tell him many times for the sake of encouraging him; but he had refrained, for the secret on which the detective's life depended, would not have been safe in Bunter's keeping.

Probably it would have given the fat junior little hope, for both Wharton and Bob Cherry were losing their own hope now.

Two days had passed, and they were still prisoners in the yamen of the mandarin, and from the Baker Street detective had come no sign.

Every day, every hour of every day, they had thought of escape; turned the matter over continually in their minds. But escape, without help from outside, was a sheer impossibility.

Each morning they were allowed to bathe and walk in the garden for a short time under the eyes of O No and the Chinese soldiers.

The rest of the day and night they spent in the cell with the bolted door and the barred window.

Impossible as escape was, Mr. O No came every meal-time and watched them while they ate, and examined the cell with the greatest thoroughness.

They could hardly blame him for his excessive caution, for his own life depended on their security.

Apart from taking every possible care that they did not get away, the fat Chinaman treated them kindly enough, and the soldiers did not venture to strike or jeer them in his presence.

Indeed, the juniors could see that Mr. O No was very far from being a stony-hearted brute like his master, and that he compassionated them, so

far as he could make up his mind to compassionate foreign devils, who had no business in China.

Food was ample and excellent, which was satisfactory to Billy Bunter—at least, in its way.

But since he had witnessed the Chinese executions, and listened to the cold threats of the mandarin, Bunter had been in a state of quivering funk.

If three days passed without the ransom arriving from Canton, the ears of the prisoners were to be cut off, and sent in a basket to Mr. Wun.

That the mandarin would keep his word, the juniors could not doubt. He would keep them alive till Ferrers

Locke was the man to do all that could be done; but he could not work miracles.

It was evening now, and the sun was setting over Pan-shan.

Wharton and Bob were gazing from the slits in the paper window. Many times they had tried their strength on the bars, but the thick, hard wood was immovable. The door, of massive oak, was bolted outside.

The garden, high-walled on every side, was solitary, save for a dingy, blue-clad figure that clipped the trees and shrubs. Each day they had seen the gardener there for a few hours, but he had never approached near their

## GREYFRIARS CORRESPONDENTS.

### No. 16.

Like peas in a pod are the two cousins Todd. But the quaintest of 'em is Alonso, who this week comes under the facile pen of our clever Greyfriars rhymester.



**M**Y worthy, respected, benevolent, And highly esteemed Uncle Ben;

Never mislery, mean, or malevolent,

But one of the kindest of men.

I write with a heart overflowing (My fountain-pen overflows, too). But pardon the blots I'm bestowing Upon this epistle to you.

The fifty-page letter you sent me Has taken me weeks to digest; The volume of verses you lent me I also devoured with much zest.

And when I recited a sonnet My schoolfellows went into shrieks; But the "Ode to a Grandmother's Bonnet"

Brought passionate tears to my cheeks.

You sent me a splendid protector To cover my frail little chest, And banish for ever the spectre Of whooping-cough, flu, and the rest. The weather is frigid and freezing, For summer is now on the shelf; But while others are snorting and sneezing—

Why, I shall be fit as itself!

You sent me the sum of two guineas, I gasped at my wonderful luck; But did not behave like the ninnies Who spend all their substance on tuck. I did not adjourn to a cookshop, Whither Bunter advised me to trot; But bought, at an excellent bookshop, The Works of Professor T. Rott.

You ask me how I am progressing; My studies are going quite well; But I have some rather distressing And sad information to tell. I played in a fierce football tussle, And kicked a fine goal, to my pride; "You champion chump!" hooted Rustil. "You've scored for the opposite side!"

My schoolfellows collared and clumped me, Their faces with fury afire; And when they had banged me and bumped me I felt like a very flat tyre! But enough of my own tribulations, I didn't intend to go on so; My love to you, best of relations— Your affectionate nephew, ALONZO.

Locke came; but with the loss of their ears.

It was too fearful to think of, yet as the hours and the days passed they could think of little else.

Hope was dying in their breasts.

Where was Ferrers Locke?

Not discovered and taken, for they were sure that they would have heard had the Baker Street detective fallen into the hands of the mandarin. His death by torture would have followed, and some news of it would have reached them. Indeed, it was more likely than not that the cruel mandarin would have forced them to witness it.

Locke had not been discovered; they were sure of that, and sure that he was in Pan-shan. But the task before him was too terribly difficult. Ferrers

Locke was the man to do all that could be done; but he could not work miracles. Once, to break the monotony, Bob Cherry had called to him from the window, and the man had stared round, and immediately hastened away as if terrified at having even heard the voice of the foreign devil.

There was a clang of a gate, and O No and the soldiers came into the garden from the courtyard beyond, with coolies carrying the evening rice for the prisoners. The gardener disappeared.

The door was opened, the bowls of food brought in.

Outside the soldiers stood with bare swords. O No entered the room, and made his usual examination.

"We're still here, Mr. O," said Bob, with a faint grin.

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O No smiled.

"That is a truth word, O honorable one!" he answered. "For if you were no longer here, I also should be on high with my ancestors." He tapped his neck. "For if you should escape, the head would be struck from the shoulders of this poor person, even as the head of Chong Lo was struck."

"I suppose we can't blame you for being careful in the circumstances," said Bob. "I wish you'd be a little less careful, all the same."

The Chinese grinned.

"These soldiers," he said, "understand no English, so I may speak words that would cost me my life if they reached the magnificent ears of Tang Wang. You are foreign devils; but I pity you in my heart. For, after all, you are but boys, and you have had no hand in the wrongs that have been heaped on my country. It was to help a Chinese that you came to China."

"That is so," said Harry. "And we should have started back to England by this time, if we had been free. Look here, Mr. O No—he paused a moment—"Mr. Wun would pay a heavy ransom for us, if he believed we should be sent back safe, but Tang Wang would not keep faith."

"The jade-like great one dares to keep faith with foreign devils, or Chinese who make friends with foreign devils."

"But Mr. Wun is rich," said Harry. "He would reward anyone who helped us out of this."

A look of fear came over O No's face as he understood the drift of the junior's words.

He made Wharton a sign to be silent. "Say nothing more," said O No. "I tremble to hear such words, lest the birds of the air should carry them to my master. What is my life in his eyes? Nothing."

And O No, without another word, left the juniors more hastily than usual, and the door was bolted on them again.

"The jolly old mandarin knows how to keep his people in order," said Bob, with a rueful grin. "I've no doubt that that sportsman's napper would be whisked off like Chong's, if we got away."

"No doubt at all," said Harry.

"That won't stop us getting away, if we get an earthly," said Bob. "But I shall feel rather sorry for poor old O No when we're gone. He's been decent to us, in his way." He grinned. "I know what I should jolly well do in O No's place if he found this cell empty some time. I should jolly well wring old Tang Wang's neck before he had time to give the order, 'nappers off!' But the old ogre seems to have got them all scared stiff."

The juniors ate their evening rice; but Billy Bunter ate more slowly than usual.

Even Bunter's appetite seemed to be failing him a little now that he understood, at last, the reality of the situation.

"One more day, you fellows," he said dimly. "I—I wonder whether old Wun will play up?"

"Let's hope for the best," said Harry.

"Ferrers Locke ought to have done something for us," grumbled Bunter. "He ought to get help from somewhere and rescue us. I've read that an army was sent to Pekin once when the Legations were besieged, and they gave the Chinks too. And that was only to save a lot of cackling ambassadors and things. And they're leaving us here."

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"We can't expect China to be invaded on our account," said Harry, with a faint smile. "Besides, times have changed, and that sort of thing isn't possible now. But we're not dead yet."

Bunter felt a fat ear tenderly with his fat fingers.

"From what I can make out that awful villain Tang Wang is going to cut off an ear from each of us, if he can't screw the money out of old Wun," he said. "One ear each, from what I make out."

"I think so," said Harry.

"Well, that means sending three ears to Canton," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Do you suppose that the old brute is particular to which ears they are?"

"Eh? I suppose not."

"What I mean is he might chop both your ears, Wharton."

"Eh?"

"And one of Bob's instead of any of mine—see?"

"What-a-t?"

"If you're going to lose one ear, you may as well lose two," argued Bunter. "If you asked Tang Wang, as a special favour, he might be satisfied with both yours, instead of one of yours and one of mine."

Wharton gazed at him.

"So long as he sends three ears, I dare say he will be satisfied. He can't care a lot whom they belong to—see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"After all, you'd look a bit lopsided with one ear left on," said Bunter. "So far as looks go, you'd really be better-looking with both off, instead of one sticking on after the other had gone. The fact is, I'm really thinking more of you than of myself in making this suggestion."

"You fat toad!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I hope you're not going to be selfish!" said Bunter anxiously. "Most likely O No will be given the job of shearing off the ears. He seems a good-tempered chap, and would very likely do you a favour if you asked him. Ask him nicely to take off both yours, instead of one of mine."

"I can see myself doing it!" gasped Wharton.

"If you're going to be beastly selfish—"

"What about asking him to nip both yours, instead of any of Wharton's?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bunter gave a jump.

"I say, don't be a silly idiot!" he ejaculated. "That's rot, of course! I say, Wharton—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Well, what about you, Bob? You're not such a selfish beast as Wharton—"

"I jolly well am!" answered Bob emphatically. "You're going to find me frightfully selfish, old fat bean. I'm sticking to all the ears I can keep, I can tell you."

Bunter grunted, and finished his rice.

It was barely possible that Mr. O No might have acceded to such a request, had it been made. But evidently it was not going to be made. In the matter of ears, Bunter had only selfishness to expect from his fellow-prisoners. It was quite a bright idea of Bunter's; but there was nothing doing!

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Hope!

"H lor'!"

With that dismal exclamation, Billy Bunter greeted the dawn of another day.

The sun rose brightly over the city of Pan-shan. In street and market,

swarms of Chinese went about their usual noisy business.

In the little room that looked on the walled garden, the light of day brought no hope to three heavy hearts.

Another night had passed; and many times Wharton and Bob had awakened, hoping against hope that some sign would reach them from Ferrers Locke. In the silence of the night, the gong of a Chinese watchman going his rounds had reached their ears; and from another direction, an outburst of crackers. But that was all. From Ferrers Locke, no sign.

The face of O No, when he came in the morning with the coolies who brought the food, was grave.

"It is the third day!" he told the juniors, "and if by the morning light on the morrow, word comes not from Wun Chung Lung, I have my orders. And though you are foreign devils, I shall sorrow to cut off your ears."

"Owl!" groaned Bunter.

"We cannot help ourselves," said Harry, in a low voice. "But if this is done, Tang Wang will not escape punishment."

O No smiled.

"His magnificent greatness is far beyond punishment," he said. "Even the war-lord who is powerful in Kwang-si fears him. The war-lords of the North he despises. The government of Canton is nothing to him. Even the English at Hong Kong cannot make him tremble. The will of Tang Wang is law; and if great sums of money do not reach him to-morrow when he rises, an ear will be taken from each of your honourable heads, to be sent to Wun Chung Lung. And doubtless then the ransom will be paid."

After the usual walk in the garden, and the bathe in the pool, the juniors were shut up again.

Bunter rolled on the kang, and tried to sleep. But sleep, which usually came so easily to the Owl of the Remove, was slow in coming now.

"You fellows ought to be able to do something!" he groaned.

"What can we do?" asked Harry patiently.

"How should I know? Something!" groaned Bunter. "I wish I hadn't come to China! I say, old Quelch will be ragging the fellows in the Form-room at Greyfriars this very minute! Don't I wish I was there! I wouldn't care even if it was maths!" groaned Bunter.

"There's a day yet!" said Bob Cherry. "Lots of things may happen in a day, old fat bean. Somebody may wring that beastly mandarin's neck."

Groan!

"Never say die, old thing."

Groan!

Billy Bunter groaned himself to sleep as the hot day wore on. In the garden, shimmering sunlight fell; and in the afternoon, the juniors saw the blue-clad figure of a gardener creeping among the shrubs, with some sort of shears in his hand.

They watched him idly, from the slits in the paper window; not because he had any interest for them, but for want of anything else to do. Precious as the minutes were that intervened between them and a terrible fate, they passed slowly.

"That's a new gardener," Bob remarked. In the monotony of their imprisonment, even such a trifle engaged attention.

"Is it?" said Harry carelessly.

"Yes; the other man had a grey beard, and this Johnny's is black. I say, what is he up to?" added Bob curiously.

For some time, the gardener had been



pruning and weeding, occasionally looking about the garden, and once or twice his glance had rested on the window of the juniors' prison-room.

Now he had approached nearer, and stopped on the sanded path that led from the courtyard gate, across the little garden, to the prison door.

Stooping on the path, he traced with his shears in the loose sand.

Other windows, from a distance, overlooked the walled garden; and anyone whose glance had chanced to fall on the gardener, would have supposed that he was weeding the path.

But the two juniors, staring from the window only ten or twelve feet from him, saw him trace in the sand two upright strokes, joined by a middle bar, which represented, if it had any meaning at all, the letter H.

They stared at it, and exchanged a startled look.

"Is the man potty?" breathed Bob. "If not, what can it mean? A Chinaman tracing English letters in the sand—"

"He's rubbing it out!" said Harry.

"But what—"

"Goodness knows."

The Chinese gardener with the black beard smoothed out the sand, traced again with the shears. This time it was a circle, O.

The juniors watched him breathlessly, as he smoothed out the sand again. Was it a signal for their eyes?

How could it be—what concern could one of Tang Wang's innumerable gardeners have with them? The former gardener, they remembered, had feared to come near

them or hear their voices. This man could have no more concern with them than the other. Yet twice he had traced letters of the Roman alphabet in the sand.

The shears were tracing again. They watched, their hearts in their eyes. Unmistakably, it was the letter P.

"Hop!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "If he's a friend, giving us a tip to hop it, he had better come and unfasten the door."

"He could not come to the door without being seen." Wharton's voice was husky with excitement. "Look! Look!"

The sand once more smoothed out, the blue-clad bearded man was tracing a fourth English letter. This time it was the letter E.

"Hope!" said Harry, in a whisper.

As if his task was done, the gardener smoothed the sand for the last time, and hurried away to a distant part of the garden.

The two Greyfriars juniors looked at one another.

They were breathing hard.

Clearly, unmistakably, the man had traced the word "HOPE," letter after letter, under their eyes; and they knew that he had seen them at the window. It could not be other than a message to them; and it could only come from Ferrers Locke.



As the sentry approached the crouching figure under the wall, Ferrers Locke sprang upon him, and the heavy butt of his revolver crashed down on the man's head!

"My only hat!" breathed Bob, his eyes gleaming.

Wharton's heart was throbbing almost to suffocation. Despair was very near to the imprisoned juniors, when that strange message came to renew hope in their hearts.

"It's from Locke!" whispered Bob. "He's in Pan-shan, as we supposed. Nobody but Locke could have sent us that message. I suppose he must have bribed the gardener, and taught him how to make the letters."

Harry Wharton nodded.

He could think of no other explanation of the amazing incident.

"We ought to let him know we understand!" muttered Bob. "He may have something more to tell us."

"Careful!" breathed Wharton. "If Locke has bribed him to do this, he would be tortured to death if he were found out. I'll shove my hand through the window next time he comes near. That will let him know."

"He knows we saw him," said Bob. "I noticed him looking this way a lot of times before he traced the letters. He knew we were looking out of the window."

They watched, their hearts thumping. That message traced in the sand on the path had given them new life. It could only come from Ferrers Locke; and it

could only mean that the detective had discovered where they were imprisoned, and was planning to help them. If only help came in time—before the dawn of another day!

It was a long time before the blue-clad figure of the gardener came anywhere near their prison again. Evidently he was aware that other eyes might fall upon him, and what his fate would be if the Mandarin's guards discovered his game.

But after a long and weary hour, the dingy figure in blue came weeding along the path again; and Wharton, seeing his eyes fixed on the window, thrust his hand through a slit in a paper pane, for a moment, as a sign. He withdrew it the next moment, and watched. He saw the gardener nod.

It was the briefest of nods, but it was perceptible. And it made strange thoughts race through the minds of the juniors.

For the Chinaman shakes his head in sign of assent; the nod is a European sign.

Bob gripped Wharton's arm. "It can't be!" he breathed. "It can't!"

"It can't!" muttered Wharton.

The same thought was in both their minds. With feverish eagerness they



watched the gardener. He was tracing again on the sand, a single upright stroke. If it was meant for a letter, it was the letter "L."

Without looking towards the juniors, apparently unconscious of them, the man in blue cotton smoothed the sand and traced "F." A minute later he had traced the letter "L." Then he moved away again and disappeared.

"I F L!" said Bob blankly.

"I, Ferrers Locke!" whispered Wharton.

"Oh crumbs!"

They knew now.

They had last seen Ferrers Locke in the tattered guise of Hung, the beggar. Now they saw him again in the neat blue cotton of a Chinese gardener. Not the remotest resemblance did he bear to Hung, the beggar, or to Ferrers Locke, the detective of Baker Street. But they knew that it was he. The initials could mean nothing else.

"Ferrers Locke!" said Bob, below his breath. "It must be—it must! God bless him!"

They watched again. From Bunter, stretched on the kang, forgetful of his terrors in sleep, came a steady snoring. The juniors were glad that he was asleep. Bunter was not to be trusted with a secret upon which all their lives depended. One careless word, babbling out in a moment of terror, would have sacrificed Ferrers Locke's life and their own chances of escape. Such a secret could not be too carefully guarded.

For a long time the gardener remained out of sight. But he appeared on the sandy path again at last. Again Wharton thrust out a hand for a moment as a sign they were on the watch. Again the gardener traced in the sand, first an upright stroke, then the figure "2."

"Twelve!" whispered Bob.

Two letters followed—a "p" and an "m." The juniors could not fail to understand. Twelve p.m. was midnight.

Evidently the Chinese gardener was of opinion that he had risked enough. He disappeared by the gate into the adjoining courtyard, by which O No was accustomed to enter.

He was gone for good this time.

The juniors still watched from the window. The gardener did not reappear. The gate remained shut until some time later, when O No entered, with the coolies, bearing the bowls of food for evening "rice," followed by the usual guard of soldiers.

Ferrers Locke—for they were sure that it was Ferrers Locke—was gone. He had left "midnight" as his message. Was it midnight that very night—in time to save them—that he meant? They hoped so, and it seemed fairly certain that it was so. The pretended gardener had risked so much in telling them as much as he had told them; a longer message might have spelled detection. Even as it was, the juniors trembled to think that he might have been observed by prying eyes from other windows.

Neither was likely to sleep that night.

It was difficult for the prisoners to conceal that new hope had been born in their hearts when O No came in with the evening rice. But they were very careful to betray nothing.

Bunter, knowing nothing, was groaning dismally, which was just as well, in the circumstances. O No could not doubt that Bunter, at least, was in a state of palpitating dread at the thought of the morrow. And Wharton and Bob Cherry assumed the longest faces they could while they were under the eyes of the fat Chinaman.

"Any message from Mr. Wun, at Canton?" asked Harry.

The question was intended to give Mr. O No the impression that the prisoners were relying solely upon Mr. Wun.

"None," said O No. "But take courage, honourable ones, a message may reach the golden ears of Tang Wang in the morning. And if the silver shoes are paid to my great and magnificent master, then your estimable ears will be spared."

"Ow!" groaned Bunter.

O No gave the wretched Owl a compassionate glance. He left the prison room, the door was bolted, and from the window, in the deepening sunset, the juniors watched him leave the garden with the soldiers behind him. The gate

on the courtyard closed, and they were gone.

Bob Cherry made a grimace.

"I'm sorry for that chap, if we pull it off!" he muttered. "He's been decent to us—he's a decent Chink. But—"

"But we can't hang on here to be cut to pieces to save O No's head!" said Harry, with a faint smile.

"No fear! He looked sorry for us—and I'm dashed if I don't feel sorry for him. No sleep to-night, old bean!"

"Not likely!"

"I say, you fellows, what are you mumbling about?" grunted Billy Bunter. "I say, this grub is good! But I seem to be losing my appetite! I say, I shan't be able to stand it to-morrow! I simply can't, you know!"

Wharton looked at Bob, and Bob gave a nod. The captain of the Remove approached close to Bunter and whispered. They had received their last visit for the night, and there was little danger now of Bunter babbling out the secret; and it would have been cruel to leave him without comfort.

"Don't say a word!" breathed Wharton into a fat ear. "But there's a chance to-night—a chance of escape!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

His round eyes opened wide behind his spectacles.

"How do you know?" he gasped.

"Never mind that. There's a chance—a good chance! We'll wake you up when the time comes, and with good luck we'll get clear of these Chinks!"

"Sure?" asked Bunter.

"Quite."

"Well, I'll stay awake," said Bunter. "I can't sleep, you know. I shan't be able to close my eyes a minute."

Bunter proved to be mistaken on that point. Perhaps the renewed hope of escape helped him. At all events, he was fast asleep soon after sunset and his snore rumbled out into the starlit garden. But Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, watching and waiting with beating hearts, did not close their eyes.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### On the Canal!

FRANK NUGENT, shading his eyes with his big bamboo hat, stood on the deck of the dingy sampan and stared at high white walls in the far distance, gleaming in the sun.

Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh followed his gaze.

Standing among a litter of ropes, packed goods, garbage and odds and ends, on the dirty deck of the sampan, the Greyfriars juniors looked like anything but what they were.

Burnt by the hot sun—still hot in South China when it was damp autumn in less favoured lands—dingy from head to foot, grimy, on a grimy craft, they looked like a crew of young coolies—older, however, than their age. Many eyes had fallen on the sampan on the way up, seeing only three dingy coolies and a half-caste from Hong Kong or Macao.

Now the walls of Pan-shan rose in the distance, over the plain ahead. It was the third day of their journey, and it was drawing to a close.

Behind the high walls of the city the sun was setting in a blaze of gold and purple. It shone in the eyes of the juniors as they gazed towards the high-walled town.

Wun Lung's voice came softly.

"That Pan-shan! That city belong Tang Wang."

Frank Nugent drew a deep breath.

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"We've got through this far, anyhow," he said.

"We've been lucky," said Johnny Bull.

"The luckfulness has been terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "But for the esteemed Wun Lung we should not have got throughfully."

Wun Lung smiled.

Without the Chinese junior, the other fellows had soon learned that they had no chance. Four or five times guards or soldiers along the river and canals had stopped and questioned them. But each time Wun Lung had done the talking, the other fellows keeping busy about the boat. Certainly, those who questioned them had no suspicion; but they would have been very quickly suspicious had not prompt answers been given in Chinese.

Had they discovered that "foreign devils" were going up into the interior in the guise of Chinese, the soldiers certainly would have arrested the party and held them for inquiry—which would have been the end of the attempt at rescue.

And when they were out of Kwangtung, and in Kwang-si, on the waters of the Si-kiang, they were within the region of Tang Wang's power; and after that, arrest would not have meant merely delay—it would have meant death.

But Wun Lung's ready tongue, and his fertile gift of invention, saved them every time, so far as authorities were concerned.

But there were other dangers on Chinese rivers. A ready tongue, and a small bribe might satisfy officials. But on the banks, in lonely places, were gangs of robbers; on the river itself, sampans manned by rough crews, sometimes traders and sometimes pirates, according to opportunity. More than one narrow escape the juniors had had from lawless rogues of the river.

Now they were, at last, in the Pan-shan canal, floating on lazily with a light wind behind the mat sail.

The city was still distant; it was doubtful if they would reach it before the sun set. And at dark, as they knew, the gates were closed, as in all Chinese cities. If they did not arrive before the red lamp burned out, in the guard-house, they would be shut out for the night.

"So that a Tang Wang's city!" said Johnny Bull, in a low voice; and his brow was thoughtful under its stain and tan and grime.

All the juniors looked grave enough.

At sight of the city the enormous difficulty of their task seemed to rush into their minds more clearly than ever before.

Doubtless, unrecognisable as they were, and with the aid of Wun Lung's glib tongue, they would be allowed to enter the city by the water-gate, and moor among the innumerable craft within the walls.

But then? Then would begin the task of finding and rescuing the prisoners—a task in which, so far as they could tell, even Ferrers Locke had not succeeded.

But it was useless to think of difficulties when they were determined to go ahead, difficulties or not. Luck and pluck had served them well so far, and might serve them to the end.

"Get on with it!" said Frank.

And after that long stare at the distant city, the crew of the Honourable and Benevolent Crane took to the long poles, and poled the sampan along the canal, assisting the slow progress of the sail.

A voice hailed them from the bank, and they looked round quickly. Three

ragged and tattered figures, in the remnants of Chinese military uniforms, stood there, waving to them.

"Soldiers again!" muttered Frank.

"Deserters, I fancy!" said Johnny Bull. "We've seen a good many of that sort."

"Velly blue!" murmured Wun Lung. "They run away from army—no likes too much plenty fightee."

The juniors had seen more than one gang of such deserters; poor wretches most of them, who had been kicked into one army or another, and had scuttled out again at the first opportunity. Sometimes they were beggars, sometimes they were robbers, sometimes both. But this especial bunch looked too desperate for the juniors to come into contact with them if they could help it. They poled on hurriedly.

The three Chinese followed them along the bank of the canal, shouting in threatening tones.

# A LAUGH A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY!

Herewith a sample for which A. L. Long, of 407, Main Road, Darnall, Sheffield, has been awarded a USEFUL POCKET KNIFE.



A man, playing a round of golf, drove off with a mighty swipe. Something soared into the air. It was not the ball, however, but a big cied of earth and grass.

"Extraordinary!" grunted the player.

"Yes, sir," remarked his saddy, "It does seem a bit out of the 'common'!"

You turn in the laugh, and I'll supply the prize!

"What are they saying, Wun Lung?" asked Nugent.

"Say shoo-tee, a'poo-see we no stoppee!" answered the Chinese junior calmly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Say wantee go along Pan-shan! No tellee thuth. Wantee cuttee thloot blong us, takes boat."

"The cutfulness of our esteemed throats is their game!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bang!

Only one of the Chinese deserters had retained his rifle. He fired it into the sampan, missing the nearest of the crew by a couple of yards, following up the shot with a threatening shout.

Johnny Bull grasped the revolver that was buckled to a belt under his ragged cotton tunic. His eyes gleamed.

But the soldier did not fire again. Possibly he had expended his last cartridge. He laid the rifle down, and after a few words to his comrades, plunged into the canal.

The other two followed him, and they swam rapidly towards the sampan.

"Look out!" breathed Nugent.

There was no escaping the attack; the slow, lumbering sampan had no chance of out-distancing the swimmers. In a few minutes the three soldiers were alongside, and striving to clamber on board. The ferocious glaring of their slanting eyes told what the fate of the crew would be, if the sampan fell into the hands of the desperate outcasts.

Crash! came Johnny Bull's pole, on the head of one of the Chinese, and the man let go his hold on the sampan, and floated away down the canal, struggling feebly.

Nugent and Hurree Singh drove their poles, together, against the chest and neck of another, and hurled him off.

The third—the man who had fired—dodged a thrust of Wun Lung's pole, and leaped on the sampan.

With a long knife in his hand, and tigerish ferocity in his face, he rushed at the juniors.

Johnny Bull swung his pole round just in time, to entangle it in the Chinaman's legs, and the ruffian staggered and fell on the deck.

In another moment he would have been up again, and leaping on the juniors with slashing knife. But Wun Lung's pole was whirling in the air, and it came down on the Chinaman's head with a crash, that cracked the skull like an egg-shell.

With a faint groan, the Chinaman sank down, and lay still.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent.

He looked hurriedly for the other two. Both of them had succeeded in scrambling ashore, and were already disappearing in the falling dusk.

Wun Lung stepped towards the man who had fallen on the deck.

"This feller plenty killy!" he remarked, with true Chinese indifference. "Tinkee he bettee go along water."

And without asking the other fellows for aid, Wun Lung tilted the body over the side, and it splashed into the canal. In a few moments it disappeared from sight in the swirling water astern of the sampan.

"Let's get on, for goodness' sake!" breathed Nugent.

And the crew of the Benevolent Crane set to work with the poles again; and the scene of the tragedy was soon left behind.

"This is jolly old China!" muttered Johnny Bull. "Give me Greyfriars!"

"What-ho!" said Nugent.

The juniors were well aware that they had escaped narrowly with their lives. They watched the dusky banks anxiously as the sampan glided on. There were few other craft on the canal; but far ahead of them they could see several sampans hurrying to reach the shelter of the city before nightfall. They poled on industriously.

They could see the distant red light burning over the gateway of Pan-shan, beside the water-gate on the canal. When that light failed, the gates would be closed, and the grills let down across the canal. And their eyes turned anxiously on the red light from time to time as they poled.

It went out suddenly, when they were not more than a hundred yards from the walls.

They poled on; and the sampan glided under the archway of the water-gate. But the grille had already been lowered, like an iron portcullis, it barred the way, the sharp spikes reaching down to



the surface of the water. There was no entering Pan-shan that night.

"Rotten luck!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"We waites along daylight!" said Wan Lung.

There was nothing else to be done, and the crew of the Honourable and Benevolent Crane backed the sampan out of the dark waters under the arch, and moored to the bank of the canal outside the walls.

Darkness lay thick on the winding canal and the wide plains. Under the stars, the juniors sat on the dingy deck of the sampan, talking in low tones. They had reached their destination; on the morrow they would be in Pan-shan. And their thoughts were with their friends, unmured within the high walls that shut them out of the city.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### The Escape from the Yamen!

#### MIDNIGHT!

Billy Bunter lay buried in slumber on the kang. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry stood at the window, looking out through the slit panes into the dim starlight of the walled garden.

Ever since the sun had gone down they had waited and watched, with suppressed excitement that grew more feverish as the long, slow hours wore away.

Through the silence of the night sounds came occasionally to their ears—the distant echo of a watchman's gong, or some sound from the yamen.

But the little walled garden was silent and still. They watched in the glimmer of the stars for Ferrers Locke.

There was only one gate to the high-walled garden, that which gave on to the courtyard, which, as they had observed, was always occupied by soldiers, who had a guardhouse there. It was unlikely that the "gardener" would be able to enter by that gate, at such an hour; he would certainly be stopped by the soldiers. They wondered how he would come—if he was able to come at all.

Slowly—slowly—the long hours dragged by. They envied Bunter and his happy unconsciousness, but not for a moment did they dream of closing their eyes.

Bob Cherry uttered a sudden ejaculation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The blue-clad figure of the gardener appeared suddenly under the window. How he had come they had not the faintest idea. But he was there.

A face was pressed to an opening of the wooden bars. A faint whisper came through the slatted paper panes.

"You are awake!"

It was the voice of Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bob.

The juniors stared in the dim starlight at the face at the window. It was yellow, wrinkled, black-bearded. They found it hard to believe that it was indeed the face of the Baker Street detective.

"Call Bunter!"

The snore rumbling from the prison-room told the detective that Bunter was sleeping.

Wharton shook the fat junior into wakefulness. Bunter sat up and blinked at him. For once Bunter seemed to have his fat wits about him, and he rolled off the kang without a word.

There was a faint sound at the door.

It opened, and a glimmer of starlight fell into the room. It closed again, with Ferrers Locke inside the room, in the darkness.

"Who—who?" breathed Bunter.

"Quiet! It's Mr. Locke!"

"Oh crikey!"

There was a moment of silence. The prisoners of Pan-shan could almost hear their hearts beating.

Then Ferrers Locke's voice was heard, low but clear.

"We must wait a few minutes! I am sure that I was not seen coming here—but one cannot be too careful!"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter. "That beast Tang Wang said you were in Hong Kong, Mr. Locke!"

"He believes that you are there, trying to raise a force to rescue us, Mr. Locke," said Harry.

The Baker Street detective smiled.

"All the better that he should think so. Such a plan would have been hopeless, of course."

"I know! But how did you get here?"

"It has not been easy," said Locke. "For two days, and most of the nights, I watched the yamen, as Hung, the beggar, learning all I could. I talked with many of the servants of the mandarin; they did not dream of suspecting that they were speaking with a foreign devil. I listened to the talk of the soldiers. I have wasted little time, you may be sure. But it was not till I made the acquaintance of Mr. To Sun that I saw light ahead."

"To Sun?" repeated Bob.

He had never heard the name before.

"A very unimportant person," said Locke. "Merely a gardener, one of the hundreds in the service of the Mandarin Tang Wang."

"Oh!" Wharton grasped it at once. "That was the gardener who was here when we were brought here—the man with a grey beard—"

"That is it," said Locke. "By that time I had ceased to be Hung, the beggar, and had become Li Wing, a gardener. The change was easy—anything can be bought in a Chinese pawnshop; and I had taken care, of course, to provide myself with plenty of money. Li Wing became friendly with To Sun—and treated him to opium."

"Oh!" murmured Bob.

"Li Wing was ambitious to enter the service of the great and glorious Tang Wang," pursued Locke, in the same low, dry tone, "and as he had saved up money, and was willing to spend it, To Sun was very friendly. Naturally, he never dreamed that I was anything but a Chinese gardener; and it was not difficult to induce him to spend a day in an opium den, and allow me to act as his substitute here."

"I see!" breathed Wharton.

"He affects to be able to obtain for his friend, Li Wing, permanent service with the mandarin!" said Locke. "In the meantime, he is making use of Li Wing—as he thinks. He is very cunning, is Mr. To Sun. I came here to-day as his cousin, Li Wing, and To Sun very gladly left me here to do his task, and departed for the opium-house. Twice to-day I have passed under the eyes of the mandarin, but they did not rest on me. Tang Wang's glance is too lofty to rest on a miserable gardener."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"All that I needed to learn, I soon learned, once I had a footing in the place," said Locke. "This afternoon I risked something in giving you the

message traced in the sand, but I had to warn you what to expect."

He paused a moment.

"I have made every arrangement that can be made," he added, "but when we leave this place we take our lives in our hands."

"Ow!"

"Courage, Bunter!" said Ferrers Locke quietly. "This is no time to be faint-hearted."

"I—I—I ain't afraid!" mumbled Bunter, through his chattering teeth. "Oh dear, I wish we were back at Greyfriars!"

"Buck up, old fat man!" said Bob. "Keep a stiff upper lip, and we'll pull through all right."

"Courage is needed," said Locke. "But, with luck, we shall pull through. Silence, now!"

The Baker Street detective stepped to the door and opened it a few inches. For several long minutes he stood and listened, and watched the garden.

Then he stepped out and signed to the juniors to follow him. They left the prison-room with beating hearts.

Locke closed the door, and silently shot the bolts into place. It was left looking as if it had not been opened since the last visit of O No.

He signed to the juniors to follow him, and in silence they followed, Wharton with a reassuring grasp on Bunter's fat arm.

Keeping in the shadows of trees and shrubbery, the detective led them through the garden, and they reached a wall at a considerable distance from the prison-room.

From a stone dragon that ornamented the roofed summit of the wall, a rope dangled.

This, evidently, was the way the detective had entered. Billy Bunter blinked at the rope in dismay.

"I—I say, have we got to climb that?" he gasped.

"Silence!"

Locke signed to Wharton and Bob to climb. They clambered up the rope actively enough, and on reaching the stone dragon, found that another rope hung down on the other side. They slid down it, and waited.

Locke waited till they were clear, and then bound the end of the rope round Bunter, under the armpits.

"Keep silent, on your life!" he whispered.

"Oh dear!"

Locke climbed the rope, sat astride of the wall, and with a great exertion of strength, drew the Owl of the Remove up after him. Bunter clenched his teeth to keep them from chattering, and somehow kept silent. In the sinewy grasp of the detective he was swung over the wall and lowered on the outer side, where Bob Cherry and Wharton helped him to land. A minute more and Ferrers Locke had thrown down both ropes and dropped lightly to the earth.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Silence!" breathed Locke.

The juniors peered about them in the dim starlight. They were in another garden, more extensive, stretching away towards a high wall in the distance. They guessed that it was the outer wall of the great enclosure of the yamen. Lakes and bridges, pools and streams and artificial cascades, showed that this was the mandarin's garden—the extensive and magnificent garden of a wealthy Chinese.

They followed Ferrers Locke, by winding ways in deep shadow. The high outer wall was reached at last, and they stopped. Locke had knotted



gether, with a loop at one end; and with the skill of a lasso-thrower he tossed up the noose and caught an ornamental figure on the summit of the wall.

"Wait!" he breathed.

From behind a thicket close to the wall he drew a wrapped bundle. The juniors looked on in silence as he opened it. It contained three suits of blue-cotton clothes, and three palm-leaf hats, and three pairs of Chinese padded shoes.

"Quick!" said Locke briefly.

The juniors did not need telling what to do. "Foreign devils" could not have passed through the streets of Pan-shan unremarked, even at so late an hour. Ferrers Locke had thought of everything. Swiftly Bob Cherry and Wharton and Bunter donned the Chinese clothes, hats, and shoes. On their faces and hands Locke smeared a yellowish pigment, and rubbed with it earth from the garden. The three Greyfriars juniors were quickly transformed into three dirty-looking Chinese.

"Lose no time now!" breathed Locke.

Wharton and Bob Cherry climbed the rope, and Locke followed them, drawing up Bunter as before. The rope was lifted over the wall, and Bunter lowered on the outer side, the others following him fast. Locke, as before, cast loose the rope and dropped last. It was a deep drop, and the detective rolled over as he landed. He was up again in a twinkling, and winding the rope round his waist under his loose tunic.

"Hark!" breathed Bob Cherry.

They were outside the walls of the yamen now, in an open space that intervened between the yamen and the nearest street. Here and there in the darkness they caught the glimmer of a coloured lantern. From the silence came the sound of a footstep, the steady tread of a soldier.

Bunter gave a faint gurgle.

"Silence!" hissed Locke.

He dragged Bunter back into the shadow of the high wall. Bob and Wharton crouched beside him. They could hear Locke breathing hard, and they knew that there was a weapon in his hand.

The steady tramp came on; the figure of a Chinese soldier loomed in the darkness. Evidently the man was a sentry going his rounds, and he had heard something, and was watchful and suspicious. He peered closely into the shadows of the wall as he came along.



Crawling at the feet of the Mandarin Tang Wang, O Ho made a sudden spring, like a tiger, and a blade flashed out from under his robe!

The juniors felt their hearts almost stop beating. The man would be passing them in a minute more, and he would perceive the crouching figures under the wall.

There was a sudden exclamation from the Chinese soldier—or, rather, the beginning of an exclamation. He had seen them. But at the same moment Ferrers Locke was upon him from the darkness, with the spring of a tiger, and the heavy butt of an automatic crashed on his head.

Without a sound the soldier sank down, Locke catching him as he fell. He lowered the senseless man into the deepest shadow of the wall, and stood listening. For a long minute he listened; but there came no sound, and he signed to the juniors to follow him.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

By the Water-Gate!

**F**ERRERS LOCKE said no word, and in silence the juniors followed him. The few days he had spent in Pan-shan had evidently well-acquainted Locke with the lie of the land. He led without a pause by tortuous streets and dusky alleys, the three juniors at his heels.

Where the detective was leading them the juniors did not know. They were out of the vicinity of the mandarin's yamen now, but within the high and well-guarded walls of Pan-shan. Every gate was closed at sunset, and over every gate was a guard-house full of soldiers.

A glimmer of water in the starlight caught their eyes.

And then the juniors divined that it was by way of the canal that the Baker Street detective hoped to get out of the city.

Hundreds of sampans were moored along the banks, lanterns glimmering on a craft here and there, though for the most part the boat-dwellers were sleeping.

Under the dark shadow of the arch the detective led, and the juniors followed him. He stopped at last.

The first thought of the juniors had been that Locke intended to seize a sampan and pole down the canal. But they saw now that no sampan would be of any use to them. In the middle of the arch across the whole width of the canal and the path adjoining was an iron gate.



It was let down from above like a portcullis in an ancient castle of Europe, at the same time that the city gates were closed. The iron bars, rusty and thick, were close together, and they ended in sharp spikes, which touched the surface of the water. No boat could pass when once that massive iron grille was let down.

"Listen!" Locke's voice came in a quiet whisper. "We must take to the water here—it is the only way!"

"But—but that gate comes down to the water!" gasped Bunter.

"We have to dive under the grille."

"Oh lor'!"

"You, Wharton, and you, Cherry, are quite able——"

"Quite!" said the two juniors together.

"I will take care of Bunter!" said Ferrers Locke. "Slip quietly into the water and swim, and when you are outside the grille hang on the other side till we are together again."

"And after we're through, sir?" asked Harry.

"We shall swim some little distance, and if a sampan is at hand we shall seize it. Sometimes a boat is shut out of the city at night, arriving too late to be let in. If we find no sampans we must land and use our feet. You are ready?"

"Quite ready, sir!" said Bob, with a deep breath.

"Go, then."

Wharton and Bob slipped together from the dark path into the shadowy water. They heard a faint squeak behind them as Ferrers Locke followed with Bunter.

In a few minutes the two juniors reached the gate of open iron-work. They grasped it, and, holding on to the bottom spikes, forced themselves under water, eyes and mouths shut. In a few moments they rose on the other side of the grille, and held on to the iron bars and cross-pieces.

A shadow loomed on the water, through the close bars. Ferrers Locke had reached the grille, supporting and propelling Bunter.

"Now, Bunter, shut your mouth and eyes!" the juniors heard him whisper.

"I—I say, it—it's c-c-cold!"

"Do as I tell you."

"I say, wait a minute! I—I say—Grooooooogh!" Bunter gurgled wildly, as his head went under. Ferrers Locke seemed to have no more time to wait for him to finish his remarks.

There was a swirling under the iron grille, then Ferrers Locke's head rose from the dark water a few feet from Wharton and Bob. Bunter's fat face appeared beside him.

"Ooooooooh!" spluttered Bunter.

"Silence!"

"Grooogh! I'm nearly drowned! I'm wet! I'm chook-chook-choked—ow! Oh crumbs! I shall catch c-c-cold!"

"Quiet!"

Ferrers Locke, still propelling Bunter, swam on down the dark canal. With him swam Wharton and Bob.

They passed out of the shadow of the arch into the starlight without the walls of Pan-shan.

Locke slowed down. He lifted one hand to point to a dark shape moored to the side of the canal, not more than a hundred yards from the walls of Pan-shan.

"That is a sampan!" he said. "Float quietly down to it and scramble on board. Give Bunter a hand. I must have my hand free for my pistol, in case it is needed."

Bob Cherry and Wharton grasped Bunter and floated him on. Ferrers Locke lifted his waterproof case above the canal, and took his automatic from it, carefully keeping the pistol above the water as he floated on towards the moored craft. A few minutes more, and they were close alongside the dark and silent sampan.

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## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Friends Well Met—the Last of Tang Wang!

"LOOK out!" muttered Frank Nugent.

Frank had been on watch on the dark deck of the sampan, while his comrades slept on mats on the deck. At his whisper the three of them awakened at once, and rose to their feet.

"What?" whispered Johnny Bull.

"Three or four Chinese in the canal!" breathed Nugent. "I've just spotted them! They're coming for us!"

"No shooting!" whispered Wun Lung. "Soldier fellow heel—comey soul! No wantee askes too much plenty question."

"We can keep them off with the poles, if they try to get aboard," said Nugent. "Don't shoot if we can help it."

Grasping the poles, the four juniors waited at the side of the sampan, watching the dark heads that floated down.

A figure reached the moored boat, and a hand was laid on the gunwale. A voice in Chinese addressed them, and Wun Lung answered in the same tongue.

"Wantee takes sampan!" Wun Lung whispered to his comrades. "Say payee plenty cashes. He telles that telles keepes off!"

"Tell him we'll brain him if he doesn't take his paw off the boat!" growled Johnny Bull.

Wun Lung put the threat into Chinese, and the hand was taken from the gunwale. There was a pause. Then from the darkness of the canal came a plaintive voice:

"I say, you fellows!"

The four juniors in the sampan jumped almost clear of the deck.

"I say, you fellows, hold me up! You're drowning me, you beasts!"

"Bunter!" gasped Nugent.

"Bunter!" said Johnny Bull dazedly.

"Is this a giddy dream, or what?"

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!" stuttered Hurree Janset Ram Singh, staring over the side at the swimmers. "Who—what—how——"

Their astounded exclamations reached the ears of the man who had placed his hand on the gunwale. He gave a sharp ejaculation in English.

"Good heavens! Is it possible?"

It was a familiar voice to the crew of the Honourable and Benevolent Crane now that it spoke English.

"Ferrers Locke!" gasped Frank.

"Oh erkey!" gurgled Johnny Bull.

The four juniors dropped the sampan poles. They hung over the side, extending their hands to the swimmers.

"Harry, are you there?" breathed Nugent.

"Franky!"

"Giddy wonders will never cease!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The four swimmers were helped on board the sampan. Billy Bunter sat down, gasping, in a pool of water. The other fellows, amazed and overjoyed by the unexpected meeting, fairly hugged one another.

"This is corking!" said Bob.

"The corkfulness is preposterous!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Glory be!" chorried Johnny Bull. "Fanny meeting you fellows! And you're all right!"

"Right as rain!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Good old Bunter! Glad to hear you grunting again," said Frank.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, have you got anything to eat on this boat?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've hardly eaten a day—lost my appetite! I'm frightfully hungry!"

"Tons of grub in the cabin," chuckled Nugent.

"Oh, good!"

Bunter rolled into the cabin. He was soon busy with the provender. While Bunter attended to that important matter, Ferrers Locke unmoored the sampan. He wasted no time in asking questions, amazed as he was at finding the Greyfriars fellows on the canal under the walls of Pan-shan. The sampan glided from the bank, and every hand wielded a pole, and swiftly they glided away, and the high walls of Pan-shan, glimmering in the starlight, dropped out of sight behind them.

Without a rest, they poled on through the night and the next day, gliding farther and farther away from the city of death.

The bright sun that shone down on the crew of the Honourable and Benevolent Crane, pointing for their lives, shone as brightly in the walled garden of the mandarin's yamen at Pan-shan. It shone on the fat countenance of O No, as he arrived at the door of the prison-room, the guard of soldiers behind him. And this time, with the soldiers, came the grim-faced executioner with his knife. For no ransom had come from Mr. Wun, and the mandarin's savage threat was to be carried out. There was a cloud on O No's fat face. The fat Chinaman did not like his task, though he did not dream of disobeying the orders of his magnificent and jade-like master.

But as he opened the prison door and looked into the cell the face of O No grew more clouded still, and haunting terror came into his slanting eyes.

For the cell was empty!

For a full minute O No stared into the empty room. He found the door bolted as he had left it the evening before, the window safely barred; yet the foreign devils were gone. Whether it was by the magic of the foreign devils, as seemed probable to Mr. O No, or by some other means, they were gone, and O No's hand went instinctively to his neck; where, as soon as the mandarin heard the news, the sword of the executioner would strike.

Death was his portion, as it had been the portion of Chong Lo; death without pity for failing in his trust. For a full minute he stood, and then he stepped back and closed the door again and replaced the bolts. The soldiers and the executioner looked at him in mute inquiry.

O No's face was calm and impassive; strangely impassive for one who was treading hand-in-hand with death. Without deigning any explanation, he ordered the soldiers and the executioner back to the courtyard, and directed them to wait there. They, as yet, knew nothing of the escape; that was O No's own secret so far. And, leaving them in the courtyard, O No passed into the yamen.

Behind his impassive, mask-like face, his thoughts were racing. Escape from

(Continued on page 25.)



# UP, THE ROVERS!

By JOHN BREARLEY.

(Introduction on page 26.)



The rogue's hand flashed inside his coat, and came out again holding a long, keen knife!

## The Finger of Suspicion!

THE solicitor's audience gasped, the room grew curiously hushed. Then Jimmy muttered:

"Why—what—"

Through Sylvester's sunless glasses a pair of blue eyes bored into his own until they seemed to pierce his inmost brain. After a long, breathless pause the solicitor bent to his desk and picked up a paper.

"There seems a big mystery here that must be cleared!" he said in clear, metallic tones. "I have scented it for some days past in going through your father's affairs. Perhaps I should have begun this inquiry differently; but I wanted to find out—" He shrugged. "Well, no matter. Sit down, James, and listen carefully."

In a sort of daze, Jimmy fell back into his seat and crossed his legs, while Philip and Tony Brennan leaned forward, all attention. Sylvester tapped his paper on the desk.

"First, I have very serious news for you, I'm afraid. I must tell you—and I regret it terribly—that your father, my old friend, left scarcely a penny in the bank! His losses during the past five years have been very big indeed—chiefly through bad football seasons."

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy dully, understanding now. "Poor old guy, nor!"

Scarcely heeding the interruption, Sylvester continued:

"The exact details I will give you later. But, first of all, do you remember fetching your father's books from the bank on the day he died?"

Jimmy nodded.

"Yes. He sent me over after the special practice match."

"Ah! He often sent you to the bank, I believe—for the books or money?"

"Yes," answered Jimmy again.

The solicitor pursed his lips.

"Exactly! Now, to make a long story short, as far as I can discover, your father had just three thousand pounds left in his account before the football season commenced. The day before he died he sent an open cheque to the bank to be cashed for that very sum. That money was handed over in Bank of England notes of one hundred pounds each, the numbers of which I have here, and that, of course, left his account empty save for a few pounds. Now"—he paused impressively and lifted a finger—"although I, as your father's solicitor, have searched his effects thoroughly, I cannot find either those bankbooks you fetched or the three thousand pounds in notes. All are missing!"

He stopped; then, chin in hand, he leaned farther across the desk.

Left in charge of a footer team, and not a bean to run it with. Still, young Jimmy Brennan is determined to CARRY ON!

"So what have you done with them, James?"

If a bomb had suddenly burst at his feet, Jimmy could not have experienced a greater, more overwhelming shock. If a ring in his seat as the meaning of the words sank home, he gaped at the lawyer, too paralysed to answer.

"M me!" he stammered eventually. "What have I done with the three thousand pounds? Why—why ask that of me?"

Leaping to his full height, Henry Sylvester pounded the desk before him sharply.

"Because," he snapped angrily, "it was you who asked the cheque!"

Everything in the office seemed to blur and sway before Jimmy's eyes. His heart gave a violent leap, and a suffocating feeling, gripping his throat, choked back his words into incoherent mutterings. He recovered himself suddenly in a burst of scolding anger that brought him to the desk in a single stride.

"You—you're mad!" he blazed.

harshly. "I cashed dad's cheque! What d'you mean?"

"You mean—you did not cash it!"

"Of course I didn't!" shouted Jimmy. "This is the first I've heard of any cheque—or three thousand pounds, either!"

The solicitor raked him with another piercing stare. Then his hand touched a desk-ball deliberately.

A clerk put his head round the door.

"Wilkins, go across to the bank and ask Mr. Thurgood, the manager, if he can spare me ten minutes' conversation here. Now, James—as the clerk hurried away—"please be calm! When Mr. Thurgood comes, you will see I have good grounds for my statement!"

Philip Brennan sprang to his feet, his brown face hard.

"Hold on a minute, Mr. Sylvester!" he snapped decisively. "I don't get this. I'm a blunt man, and, as I understand it at the moment, you are practically accusing my nephew of making away with three thousand pounds that belonged to his father the day before he died! Is that what you're driving at?"

Sylvester drew himself up coldly.

"I am not driving at anything, Mr. Brennan!" he disdained. "And I resent your tone, sir! The fact remains that

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a large sum of money from the estate of my late friend and client is missing, and, as far as I can trace, James here is the only one who has handled that sum. It is my legal duty to account for it, and I repeat that, if you will wait a few minutes, you will see my reason for this inquiry."

A heated retort tumbled on Philip Brennan's lips, but he thought better of it and sat down. An eternity of painful waiting elapsed, during which Tony Brennan glared openly and Jimmy stared blindly before him, his heart too full for words. Robbing his dad! That was what Sylvester meant!

At last the office door opened and the clerk re-entered.

"Mr. Thurgood, sir!"

Charles Thurgood—tubby, genial, and good-humoured—came bustling in at once. As befitting his position in the Railton Bank, he was a shrewd, hard-headed man in business, but he made it a rule never to look like one. Few people had ever seen him without a jovial smile on his round, pink face, and he had been one of James Brennan's best-trusted acquaintances in the little town. He brought with him now a healthy, comforting breeze that made Jimmy perk up instantly. With Mr. Thurgood at hand, he was sure this ghastly cloud would soon be cleared away, and then—his fists clenched—he would have some words to say to Mr. Henry Sylvester!

"Good-morning! 'Morning, all!" boomed Thurgood, looking quickly at the serious faces around him, and twinkled kindly at Jimmy. "Hallo, lad! Any trouble? What can I do?"

He took a chair, and Henry Sylvester, sitting forward, began to speak. But before he could say a word, Jimmy was on his feet facing him, and his white face wore an expression that wiped the smile from Thurgood's lips at once and made the others stiffen in their chairs. His mouth was set in a firm, bloodless line, and under his frowning brows two eyes blazed like diamonds. "Young" Jimmy Brennan had disappeared, leaving in his place a fiery and determined-looking stranger!

"Half a sec., Mr. Sylvester!" he cried. "This is my affair, and you've got my goat! Now, Mr. Thurgood"—whipping round fiercely—"I take it you know all about my dad's affairs?"

"Ye-es, Jimmy," murmured the banker—"at least, as far as his bank account and money matters went, you know."

"Right! Now, this is the trouble. Mr. Sylvester wants to make out that the day before dad died I cashed at the bank and cashed a cheque signed by him for three thousand pounds—nearly all the money he had left! I deny that—flatly! And the money can't be found!"

The words rang out sharply. For a moment the bank manager stared at him, and Jimmy stared back, his heart thumping wildly. He had expected Mr. Thurgood to jump up in instant protest and give the lie to the lawyer's weird statement. Instead, a puzzled, uneasy look appeared on his friendly face.

"I don't understand quite. I hate to say it, boy, but I'm a busy man. Have you brought me here for a joke?"

"Joke!" gasped Jimmy, flushing scarlet. "Don't you see, sir? Mr. Sylvester says I cashed dad's cheque for—"

The manager looked at him helplessly. "But—but you did, Jimmy!" was his stammering reply. "Don't you remember? Why—why I attended to you myself, because the cashier was out to lunch and it was such a large amount, anyway!"

Jimmy reeled.

"You—you gave me the money?"

"Why, yes, lad. Thirty hundred-pound notes. The numbers are entered in the ledger!"

Not even in that awful moment when his father had died had Jimmy been so appalled. A red mist swam before his eyes, through which he dimly made out the alarmed expressions of his uncle and cousin, and Henry Sylvester's lean, brooding face.

"You didn't—it wasn't me!" he cried wildly. "I know nothing about the money. Don't you believe me!"

Philip Brennan sprang up again.

"Of course we believe you, Jimmy!" he thundered. "It's all rot!"

"Darn rot!" snorted Tony. "What's the game, Mr. Sylvester?"

"Gentlemen—gentlemen!" Charles Thurgood, smiling no longer, waved imploring arms. "Be calm—please! Let's get to the bottom of this mystery!"

"And quickly!" struck in the lawyer stonily.

Jimmy strode forward, his jaw ugly.

"Yes—you bet he will," he stormed. "I'll see to that! Gentlemen"—he faced them squarely, a certain dignity on his young face—"I did not cash that cheque. If Mr. Thurgood says I did—he's mistaken; someone has impersonated me. And that being so, it's a safe guess that the cheque wasn't genuine either. It was a forgery!"

"But it was from your father's own cheque-book, Jimmy!" protested Thurgood. "And though the light inside the bank isn't good, I'll swear it was you who brought it. Hang it, with a sum like that involved, we're as careful—"

"I don't care—it was a forgery!" persisted Jimmy stubbornly. Then a sudden thought occurred to him. "And maybe dad's murder is mixed up in all this. I'm going to the police at once!"

Thurgood nodded.

"By all means—the police!" he cried energetically. "By gad, if what you say is true, boy, I shall be held responsible. Not, of course, till it's proved to the hilt!" he concluded hastily.

A thin hand fastened firmly on Jimmy's arm.

"Wait!" Sylvester's voice was soft but insistent, and he answered Jimmy's hostile glare with a milder look. "You honestly know nothing about this cheque, my boy?"

"I keep saying so!" growled Jimmy grimly.

"Very well, then. The money is

#### THE FIRST CHAPTER BRIEFLY RETOLD.

Determined to stop the rot that has set in, James Brennan, the genial but masterful owner of the Railton Rovers F.C., decides to pay a huge transfer fee for an experienced centre-forward to put new life into his team. The deal fails to materialize, however, for Brennan is robbed of his savings by means of a forged cheque and then attacked by some unknown assailant who deals him a blow to the heart which proves fatal. Left to carry on the club, and ignorant of the theft, young Jimmy Brennan, the Rovers' star inside-right, resolves to fulfil his father's wishes, only to learn from the family solicitor that he has been left penniless.

(Now read on.)

lost. Mischief has been done and we must call in the police. Can you come at once, Mr. Thurgood?"

The bank manager glanced at his watch.

"W-well," he hesitated. "The mischief's done now as you say, and a few minutes will make no difference. Can you wait half an hour? It may be a long job at the police station, and I'd like to wait until the bank is closed for the day. Besides, I want to make inquiries of the other clerks myself!"

The solicitor bowed.

"Do you agree, James? Then in half an hour, Mr. Thurgood, we will all go to the police station together. Thank you!"

The worried banker hurried out and the Brennans sank back into their chairs again, the tension in the air as strong as ever.

Unperturbed, however, Henry Sylvester shuffled his papers again.

"It seems for a moment we must shelve this unpleasant matter!" he said quietly. "Rest assured I will do all in my power to get it cleared. But, James, you quite realise, I trust, that until the missing money is found, I am afraid you are left penniless. Now you see why I asked what you intended doing about the football club and the ground!"

A fresh shock hit Jimmy. He sat for some minutes trying to adjust his thoughts to the new position, and presently one fact emerged as clear as crystal. The Rovers could go on—with gate-money; and he still had a roof over his head. But—he would have to do without Cowan, of Oldham Athletic, or anyone else now as his new centre-forward! Knowing his dead father's wishes, and what an important thing it was that the Rovers' raw forward-line should be steadied by a good leader, this was a crushing blow.

But he did not say so. Instead—

"I must think things over!" he muttered doggedly. "Bill Nye may think of something!"

Sylvester did not answer at once, beyond a slight lift of his eyebrows. But from the pile on his desk, he picked up a letter. His audience waited tensely.

"In that case, I will read this letter—addressed to me yesterday as your father's executor. It is from the Dalmeny Land and Building Society, of London. Apparently, they are a new firm on the look-out for desirable building sites; but who their directors are and how big they are I do not know—yet. I shall make inquiries. In the meantime, they have written making an offer to buy up the Rovers' football ground, lock, stock, and barrel—for £2,000 in cash, providing you agree at once!"

Jimmy's jaw dropped.

"Then they can go to blazes!" he cried furiously. "Cheek!"

Sylvester inclined his head.

"It is a preposterous offer, I agree!" he said smoothly. "In the ordinary way, I should not have given the letter a second's thought. But now, in view of your altered circumstances, it occurred to me you might be inclined to deal with them. After all"—he went on in a kinder tone—"you are very young to manage the affairs of a big League club—although you may rely on my help at all times!"

"And mine!" jerked Philip Brennan sturdily.

"Just so. Yet a large sum of ready money might pave the way for your



entry into some good profession that would prove a life-long career!"

Jimmy breathed hard through his nose.

"Mr. Sylvester, I see your point and I suppose you're giving me good advice, but my grandfather started the Rovers and dad has practically devoted his life to the club. If I sell the ground, where would the club be? I could not get another ground in Ralton, and equip it with seats and stands! And there might be all sorts of League penalties attached. The club would break up—vanish!"

He drew a deep breath.

"It's true I'm broke—until that three thousand is found. And it's a fact that I can't buy a new centre-forward for this season now. I'll have to put up with the old one. But you can write and tell that company of land-sharks to stuff their offer up the chimney!"

He got up quickly and laid a firm hand on the lawyer's desk.

"Believe me, as long as I've got a kick in me, Ralton Rovers footer club is going to last. And my family is going to run it!"

In silence, Henry Sylvester folded the letter and placed it carefully in a little drawer.

"So be it, James. Now let us go to the police!"

### Footsteps in the Dark

"So that's that, Bill! I'm not only broke—which means the Rovers are broke, too—but I'm practically under suspicion of having forged dad's cheque for all the money he had left, and stolen the cash, too. It—it's just— Oh, I dunno—"

Jimmy Brennan's voice, tired to breaking-point, trailed away into silence. The end of the day had come at last—the worst and longest he had ever known.

Huddled deep in an armchair in the peace of his father's study, he sighed wearily and looked across to where, in another chair, Bill Nye, the famous old trainer of Ralton Rovers, puffed thoughtfully at his evening pipe. The visit of the calm, comforting veteran, whom he had found waiting for him on his arrival home, had come like a blessing to the worried youngster, and, without hesitation, he had poured out a full tale of the day's events.

"Gosh, it's been terrible!" he mused, as Nye made no reply. "The finish of the inquest was bad enough; but when we went along to Henry Sylvester's office afterwards, and the—the business of the cheque came out, I was knocked clean over. We had to call in the police; and then I had two solid hours' cross-examination by Inspector Blake and Sylvester, in a cold, bare room at the station, that gave me the pip! And nothing was settled!"

Bill Nye grunted.

"Ay, 'tis a bad business all round, lad. What I can't understand is Charles Thurgood and Sylvester both pitchin' into you. They've known you, same as me, since ye was a baby. What do they mean by saying 'twas you that brought in the cheque?"

"Oh, old Thurgood's all right!" replied Jimmy sadly. "He's been as decent as anything, and he believes now that someone impersonated me—must have done! He told me afterwards that he was as sick as a hen for having got me into trouble at all. But, of course, he had his duty to the bank to do, and he had to tell the police the full yarn!"

Jimmy paused, and a hard light crept into his grey eyes.

"It's old Sylvester who's got me

rattled!" he confessed slowly. "He's made it pretty plain that he thinks I'm a crook, Bill; and that's a fact. Uncle got so fed-up at the finish with his suspicious attitude that he blew up completely. He told the inspector that, unless the police wanted to make a definite charge against me there and then, he wasn't going to allow them to question me any more to-day. And so we came away!"

"Ay; that was good! An' Henry Sylvester's a liar, and I'll tell him so!" snorted the veteran.

His pipe glowed fiercely in the unlighted room as he rose to his feet.

## IS YOUR NAME HERE?

### Result of our great "Cricket Scorers" Competition.

Here's the result you fellows have all been waiting for!—After carefully checking all the stacks of entries sent in, it has been found that no reader entered a correct solution to the four sets of puzzles. THE TWO CRICKET BATS, AUTOGRAPHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN TEST TEAM, have therefore been awarded to the following two readers whose efforts were most nearly correct, containing one error:

ALFRED HESTER, 49, Dashwood Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks.  
DOUGLAS MAIDMENT, 17, Kingsley Street, Battersea, S.W.11.

The splendid "HORNBY" TRAIN SETS have been won by these fourteen lads whose solutions each contained two errors:

E. Avons, 7, Camperdown Terrace, Exmouth, Devon; William A. Carlton, 22, Haggerston Road, Dalston, E.8;  
K. H. Cook, 118, Albert Road, Handsworth, Birmingham; Arthur Crossley, 45, Gordon Street, Elland, Yorks;  
J. L. Goods, 10, Hall Road, Hebburn-on-Tyne; E. W. Harding, 191, Highbury Hill, London, N.5; Kenneth G. Harland, 48, Woodcote Road, Leigh-on-Sea; George Harman, 290, Mitcham Road, Croydon; H. Jeffrey, 15, Smith Street, Skelmersdale, Lancs;  
Matthew Martin, Broad Lane, Southgate, Pontefract, Yorks; Andrew O'Haire, Church View, Buncrana, Co. Donegal; O. E. Orman, 51, Olive Road, Canton, Cardiff; Cecil Rogers, Techonfach, Bynes, Liselly; Frank Wood, 16, Park Avenue, Whitley Bay.

#### The Correct Solution was.

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Hobbs    | 13. Robins   |
| 2. Bradman  | 14. Watson   |
| 3. Hammond  | 15. Bows     |
| 4. Woodfull | 16. Bibbles  |
| 5. Woolley  | 17. Parker   |
| 6. Wade     | 18. Barnett  |
| 7. Chapman  | 19. Ponsford |
| 8. Grimmett | 20. Sidwell  |
| 9. Case     | 21. Bray     |
| 10. Geary   | 22. Fender   |
| 11. Holmes  | 23. Cox      |
| 12. Cook    | 24. Morgan   |

"Howsome, Jimmy, I agree with your uncle. Ye've had enough for one day. Don't worry; the cheque'll come to light all right, and the Rovers'll struggle along somehow. If we can't afford a new centre-forward this season, as we hoped, then I'll put some ginger into the one we've got, if I have to belt him with a corner-post! Get ye to bed, and don't miss trainin' in the morning, or we'll have you laid up. We'd be in a bigger mess then!"

The old trainer's gnarled hand clumped warmly on Jimmy's shoulder.

"Good-night, laddie! Ye can depend on me and the Rovers, anyway!"

At the warm, hearty words a little glow of comfort came back to Jimmy's heart, and he shook hands gratefully. But soon, left to himself, his thoughts went back to the scene in the police-station a brief hour ago. Uneasy

memories danced before him—of Inspector Blake, keen and alert at his desk, Philip Brennan, furious at what he called 'persecution,' and, above all, the thinly-veiled suspicion lurking in Henry Sylvester's cold, tight-lipped face.

Again and again he tried to fathom what was behind it all—and who; for somewhere in the background, he was sure, someone was working against him.

Sitting there, in the quiet study where his father had died, it seemed to him, all at once, that the room was full of evil menace, threatening him, weighing him down.

It was an eerie feeling that gripped him, like an invisible claw reaching out of the gloom. So near did its ghastly presence feel that, in spite of himself, he sent a quick, nervous glance into the shadows over his shoulder.

"Fool!"

Jimmy growled, and shook himself impatiently. This was rot; he'd have to pull himself together. The long day, spent in stuffy, confined rooms, had jangled his nerves, and a dose of fresh air was indicated right speedily.

Pulling back the french windows, he stepped on to the tiny veranda outside. A cool breeze, rustling through the dark garden, fanned his forehead soothingly, yet he could not quite shake off the ghostly feeling that had clutched him back in the study.

He leaned over the veranda rail, glad to be in the open once more. Everything was dark and still. The moon had not risen yet, and a deep, velvety blackness hid the back of the garden and the tall trees surrounding his house.

He smiled grimly. His house! And beyond the hidden trees, with the splendid main stand towering above their tops, was his football ground! He owned it all now, and he was penniless!

Vaguely he fell to wondering what his father had thought when he had discovered the true state of his affairs. Poor old dad! Across this very lawn someone had crept silently—to murder him. That was what it amounted to!

If he could only get his hands on the murderer!

His whole body stiffened at the thought. Once again, like an icy douche, the uncanny feeling that some pressing danger was near, ran through him. He peered ahead, almost expecting to see an enemy before him. He shuddered again at the foolish thought.

And it was at that moment that out of the darkness came sounds that drained the colour from his healthy face, leaving it cold and hard. From among the trees at the foot of the lawn his keen ears had caught the faint click of a gate opening and closing hurriedly. And afterwards, the rapid thud of soft but frantic feet running across the grass.

He went over the veranda rail on the jump, shoulders hunched as he prowled across to intercept the mysterious runner.

His heart beat heavily. No one but himself and Bill Nye had the right to enter that gate leading from the back of the footer ground to the Firs. Yet someone was crossing the garden at top speed.

Another murderer, or the same one? His doubts gave place to a fierce, gleeful joy. They'd have a fight on their hands this time!

Three lithe strides took Jimmy across the turf. And then, from the direction of the Rovers' ground, came a sudden, tearing explosion that stopped him in his tracks. The darkness of the night

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was suddenly torn asunder by a vicious, dazzling light. A low, gushing roar followed instantly.

"Fire!"

Looking up dazedly, Jimmy's blood froze as he saw, high above the great, main stand itself, a crimson tongue of fire leap hungrily into the air. Another flame joined it; then a third. The trees and garden of the Firs began to glow, softly and horribly red.

Jimmy saw something else, too—something that made him snap into action with a sob of utter rage. Speeding swiftly beneath the fringe of trees encircling the lawn was the vague figure of a man.

The Raiton main stand was on fire. But in another second young Jimmy Brennan, its owner, had crashed solidly into the fleeing incendiary, and was fighting like a red-headed band.

Jimmy could not see his antagonist's face; had no idea who he was. They fell, rolling over on the grass, punching at each other with all their strength; rose again, fell again, still fighting. From the feel of his fist on the man's face Jimmy knew that he wore some kind of mask, and once, when they reeled at death-grips out of the shadows, he caught a glimpse of a monstrous head hidden in a black cowl, through which two eyes burned.

Practically the firebrand fought free, and slung the lad sideways with a swing of his muscular arms. Before Jimmy could recover, the rogue's hand flashed inside his coat, and came out again, holding a long, keen knife that flamed orange in the firelight as he swung it menacingly above his head.

From a "roughhouse" it had turned to a "killing," and only Jimmy's cool recklessness saved his life. He jumped in again, then, as the knife hissed downwards towards his shoulder, he swayed neatly and dodged; and dodging, gripped the masked man's arm and wrenched it in a ju-jitsu lock Bill Nye had taught him long ago.

A shriek of pain rang out, and the knife went spinning against a tree-trunk. Flushed with success, Jimmy let go his hold, and swarmed over his man like a landslide.

"Got you—ah!" he gasped.

(Now look out for next week's gripping instalment, featuring our hundred per cent Britisher, Jimmy Brennan. It's full of thrills, lads!)

## THE CITY OF DEATH!

(Continued from page 24.)

Pan-shan—from Kwang-si—before the mandarin knew! That was futile—no far corner of China would save him as long as Tang Wang was chief of the Red Dragon Tong. Nothing could save him—nothing—unless there was one way! And the man who already felt the sword of the executioner on his neck thought of that one way; and under the heavy lids of his slanting eyes there was a desperate glitter.

Calm, quiet, reverential, was his face as he passed into the presence of Tang Wang, guards and attendants giving free passage to the confidential servant of the mandarin. And in the mandarin's private cabinet, where Tang Wang sat alone on a chair of ivory, O No kow-towed at his feet. And as he crawled at the feet of the descendant of the Ming, the man who was doomed to death—unless the mandarin died—made a sudden upward spring, like a tiger, and a blade flashed out from under his robe and was buried to the hilt in the heart of the Mandarin Tang Wang.

One faint cry escaped the man who had plotted to fill the vacant throne of the Manchus.

It was the last sound that ever left the lips of Tang Wang.

O No looked at him quietly, calmly, wiped the knife and concealed it, and left the cabinet. To the officer outside the door he said that the mandarin commanded that he was not to be disturbed till the hour of rice. And quietly he went his way; quietly, till he was in the saddle of the swiftest horse in the mandarin's stable and riding out of the eastern gate of the city. And then O No rode like the wind.

### THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Homeward Bound!

**M**R. WUN opened his almond eyes very wide when a dingy sampan floated into the canal in his garden at Canton. And he gave praises to innumerable Chinese gods and goddesses when he found that the dingy crew were his son and his son's friends. There had been, so far as the Greyfriars party had been able to see, no pursuit; they had made their way back to Canton swiftly

and safely. It was not till later that they had learned why there had been no pursuit.

There was high feasting in the house of Mr. Wun. Grandfather Ko rejoiced, little Wun San rejoiced; Mr. Wun rejoiced; there was rejoicing all round. Greatest of all was the rejoicing of Billy Bunter, free at last to devote his whole attention to the ample foodstuffs in the house of Mr. Wun.

Safe again within Mr. Wun's hospitable walls, Harry Wharton & Co. soon forgot their perilous adventures in the interior.

And then the news trickled through of the death of the tyrant of Pan-shan. The Mandarin Tang Wang was dead; the Red Dragon Tong had lost its chief. And if the tong continued to exist it was under some other leader to whom the mandarin's feuds were nothing.

The danger of Wun Lung had passed. To save him from Tang Wang he had been brought home to his father's house in China; but the mandarin was dead, and he was safe from that long and bitter enmity. And so it came about that when the juniors left Canton to return to England Wun Lung was still a member of the party—going back to Greyfriars.

Down the river to Hong Kong they went in Mr. Wun's magnificent house-boat. With magnificent ceremony, Mr. Wun saw them on board the Silver Star. And after long farewells the yacht glided out of the roadstead of Hong Kong—homeward bound.

Billy Bunter stood staring back at the Peak through his big spectacles as the Silver Star glided away from Hong Kong. There was a thoughtful expression on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter.

"Well, fatty?"

"Beastly country and beastly heathens!" said Bunter. "But—the grub was good!"

He gave one more blink at the Flowery Land.

"The grub was good!" he repeated.

That was Billy Bunter's farewell to China.

THE END.

(There will be another corking yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's **MAGNET**, entitled: "**SAVED FROM THE SEA!**" Make a point of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy **WELL IN ADVANCE!**)

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No. 17.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

November 1st, 1930.

**PAINLESS DENTISTRY!** Teeth extracted without a twinge at half-a-crown a time. No squalling and squirming; no agony and anguish. Master Robert Cherry writes: "When I called on you a few days ago to have an aching molar extracted, you gave me no pain whatever. I thoroughly enjoyed your laughing-gas—in fact, I've been laughing ever since, and simply can't stop!"—MR. CHRISTOPHER WRENCH, Surgeon-Dentist (opp. Courtfield slaughter-house).

# Greyfriars Herald

Edited by  
**HARRY  
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F.C.R.**

**LATEST  
EXTRA  
GOOD  
EDITION**

## GREAT DONKEY RACE AT GREYFRIARS

### ASSES AND ASSES

**Our Racing Correspondent writes:**  
This race for the Greyfriars Stakes, is the titbit of the programme. I saw the donkeys being tried-out this morning, and was much impressed by the form of some of the animals. As for the others, their owners—or jockeys—must have been pretty to enter them!

*Probable Starters and Jockeys.*

Mr. George Wingate's NIMBLE NED .. Owner  
Mr. Horace Coker's SILENT ASS .. Another One!  
Mr. Bob Cherry's CHEERFUL BOB .. Bob Cherry  
Mr. H. Wharton's FLEETING FRIAR .. Owner  
Mr. W. G. Dunlop's PUFFING BILLY .. Another  
The Nabob of Dinnipura's TERRIFIC .. Puffing Billy!  
Mr. H. Skinner's TIDE SNEAK II. .... Owner

**Stewards' Prices!**  
Evans Nimble Ned: 6/4 against Cherry Bob and Fleeting Friar: 3/1  
Terrorific: 10/1 The Sneak II.: 80/1 Puffing Billy: 100/1 Sily Ass.

I will now run up the chances of the various runners, and those who study my notes carefully should be on the winner. The betting, of course, will be in jam tarts—not in cash.

**SILLY ASS.**—Horace Coker is very erect on the chances of his mount; but having seen the two "Silly Asses" performing together this morning, I cannot share Coker's enthusiasm. The animal is stubborn and fractious, and the jockey has no idea how to handle him. Coker was thrown three times during the trial, and he may confidently expect a further crop of tumbles this afternoon.

**PUFFING BILLY.**—Billy Dunlop is cocksure that this creature will carry him to a comfortable victory. He has backed him heavily with bookmaker Fisher T. Fish, and hopes to reap a huge harvest of jam tarts. Having seen "Puffing Billy" at his antics, however, I shall be much surprised to see him finish the course. His jockey is much better at "finishing courses" than he!

**THE SNEAK II.**—I have no sneaking fancy for this animal; and I am not telling tales out of school when I say that nobody but Silmer seriously fancies him. Of course, he might manage to snare home in front of the others, but—it's a very big BUT!

**TERRIFIC.**—Now we come to the mount that matters. This animal impressed me very favourably at the trials, and his pace was worthy of his name—terrific! Horace Coker handled him like an expert, and if he gets well off the mark, he may easily spring a surprise. My readers are well advised to have a jam tart each way on Tidy's mount.

**FLEETING FRIAR AND CHERRY BOB.**—Here we have a pair of genuine candidates, who will prove the chief dangers to the favourite, NIMBLE NED. They will be well and capably ridden, and are in fine fettle. Of the pair, I have a slight preference for FLEETING FRIAR, but there will not be much in it at the finish.

**NIMBLE NED.**—The popular George Wingate hopes to make history this afternoon by winning the Greyfriars Stakes. His mount is a hot and strong fancy, and is being backed up and down the school. Whether the overwhelming enthusiasm for the favourite will prove justified, remains to be seen.

**Latest Information from Owners!**  
Mr. George Wingate: "I am quietly confident."  
Mr. Bob Cherry: "I am confidently quiet."  
Mr. Harry Wharton: "Every hope of winning."  
Mr. Harold Skinner: "No fear of losing."  
The Nabob of Dinnipura: "The windmills will be TERRIFIC!"  
Mr. Horace Coker: "I shall win in a common cause."  
Mr. W. G. Dunlop: "Puffing Billy will show the others a clean pair of heels. I washed him down this morning!"

### SIX RASHERS, SIX EGGS & 21b. SOSSES

#### BUNTER'S INVALID DIET

MR. WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, who is confined to his bed with a severe bilious attack, passed a better night. This morning he was able to sit up and take a little nourishment, in the shape of six rashers of bacon, six fried eggs, and two pounds of pork sausages. Bunter calls this an "invalid diet!"

#### MR. HAROLD SKINNER, who is confined to the detention room, following an attack by a savage form master, passed a very troubled day. He is reported to be slowly sinking—into a state of deep dejection.

**MR. HORACE COKER,** who met with a slight mole-eying mishap on the high road last Saturday, has now succeeded in "turning the corner," and is on the high-road to recovery.

**LORD NAVLEVERER,** who is suffering from one of his periodical attacks of sleepy ecstasies, has taken a change for the better, and hopes to feel better for the change!

**MR. ROBERT CHERRY,** who sprained his ankle whilst playing football on Wednesday, is going on well, but "carrying on" something awful! He will be unable to turn out for the Remore team on Saturday, and this has put him nose out of joint!

**MASTER DICKY NUGENT,** who stumbled over a tree-stump in Friarfield Wood yesterday, and badly crippled himself in consequence, is, we regret to announce, not yet out of the wood!

### HONOUR FOR FORMER HOUSEMAID

#### Miss Olive Branch As Olive Branch

Major-General Sir Hector Bellhouse (1888-1893) has been appointed Assistant-Deputy-Director of the War Department.

#### Miss Olive Branch, formerly a housemaid at Greyfriars, and now a Member of Parliament, will be one of the British delegates at the next Peace Conference.

**A. Day (1876-1883)** has been made a knight.  
Gunn, Junior (1890-1893), is now a Gentle Canon.

**Colonel James Wharton, D.S.O. (1884-1891)** has written a story of his school-days at Greyfriars. Six copies of the book have been presented to the school library for the use of the fellows. The story is thrilling and exciting, and so Greyfriars men should read it. It is entitled "Glorious Youth!" and the publishers are Messrs. Young, Jay, & Sprightly.

**Willoughby de Broke (1900-1905)** has written a "sob" letter, telling that he is down and out. He hopes the present generation of Priests will rally to the rescue of an Old Boy who is on his beam-ends. On searching the school Register, however, we fail to trace an Old Boy of this name, and can only conclude that Mr. Willoughby de Broke is a humbug and impostor. You will be well advised, therefore, to keep your money in your pockets.

**Christmas is Coming!**  
Why not plan your holiday now? Grand tour of the United States, personally conducted by the American Citizen, will start from Greyfriars next breaking-up day. This unique opportunity in the World must not be missed! All you have to do is, part up with the cash and sit tight. The rest you leave to us! Apply at once before the rush to the American Touring Syndicate, Study No. 14.

### COBWEBS AT CHESS

#### Breathless Finish SNORE!!

7.50 p.m. The two finalists—Wibley and Horace Singh—enter the Common-room, which has been converted into a "pawn-shop" for the occasion. Enormous crowds present, estimated at nearly half a dozen! Sentinels posted at door to keep out gate-crashers.

8 p.m. Game starts. "Your move, Inky!" says Wibley. "No, my preposterous friend and opponent! It is up to you to get the ball offitfully rolling!" replies Inky. Result—nobody moves.



8.10 p.m. Game going strong. All chessmen still intact on the board. Inky and Wibley scowling fiercely—trying to memorize chess into movement, apparently!

8.15 p.m. Wibley makes the first move—a stroke of his eyelash!  
8.20 p.m. Inky counters Wib's move by twitching his ears. Chessmen still intact. Crowd growing ferocious.  
8.30 p.m. Bluebottle settles on chess-board. Paolo and pawns mount! Referee swears blue-bottle—disturbing the peace with out upsetting the pieces.  
During the excitement, a spectator faints, and is revived by ink being splashed into his face. Game resumed.

8.31 p.m. Wibley moves a pawn! And Bob Cherry propounds a conundrum: "If it takes thirty-one minutes to move a knight, will it take a day to move a knight?"  
8.32 p.m. Wibley alters his mind, and moves pawn back again. Spectators growing murderous.  
8.40 p.m. Cobwebs forming over Horace Singh's nodding head. Wibley's chin.  
8.50 p.m. Chessmen remain unmoved. Audience thinking of making a move, themselves—to bed! Wibley still wobbling—un- (Continued on next edition.)

### NEVER EAT PEAS WITH KNIFE

#### Table and Stable Manners

#### BUNTER LAYS DOWN LAW

People of culture and refinement—like me—have perfect table manners. But there are some fellows I could mention, whose table manners are more like stable manners! They don't know the first thing about the etiquette of the table, though I have tested three worms—I mean, wasted three worms—trying to teach them.

Perhaps the following rules which I have compiled will prove useful to these greedy gluttons and uncouth commoners. (No names mentioned, but believe me, in the biggest offender!)  
(1) Never rush madly when the dinner-bell goes. Just stroll sedately into the dining-hall, as if you are not particularly interested in the proceedings. On no account scramble for a seat, but should you find another fellow occupying your place—yank him out of it by the scruff of his neck!

(2) Never take the biggest portion of whatever may be on the dish. Always take the piece nearest to you. But be sure to twist the dish round before-hand, so that the biggest portion is confronting you!

(3) If you want anything passed to you, never point. Others may not see the point, and you will be left stranded. Don't nudge your neighbour in the ribs, either. And don't say, "Pass the so-and-so!" It sounds so greedy. Simply stand up, sprawl across the table, and grab whatever takes your fancy. If you knock your neighbour's dinner into his lap in the process, don't trouble to apologise. He should be more careful!

(4) Never make noise whilst eating. It's only ill-bred persons who put the din in dinner.  
(Continued from previous column.)  
certain whether to open the offensive or not. Horace refuses to hurry, and starts to sing.  
8.55 p.m. Snore! Wibley has fallen asleep. Referee promptly disqualifies him, and awards Championship to Inky, who is congratulated on winning a fast and furious battle.  
9 p.m. Enter George Wingate—with esplanant—and players and spectators become bed-wet in game move!



Swallow your soup like you would swallow an insult—in silence! Consume your grates without making a noise like a saw-mill in action. The way to do this is to swallow everything whole! Of course, there is a risk that the master will "chew you up," if you don't show.

(5) Never eat peas with a knife. Pick them up between thumb and forefinger, and pop them into your mouth.  
(6) Never rise from the table feeling the worse for food. But, of course, this is impossible at Greyfriars, where they never give you soup to satisfy a sparrow. Simply digest those simple rules, and you will suffer no painful after-effects!

**Sporting Queries Answered.**  
By H. VERNON SMITH.  
W. G. B. (Remore) complaining that he is "kept out of the team by the keepin's sheer jellies." Perhaps he's right; the only thing I can imagine allowing him a place would be the keepin's sheer jellies!  
C. R. T. (Fourel)—"Is it wise, after all, to lower oneself by playing against tips?" Not when the fags are in the habit of licking one hollow, dear Ceol!

**ANXIOUS INQUIRY** (Remore).—"Why doesn't the lad from Lancashire score more goals?" Because his opponents always Mark Linley!

**UNKNOWNED PROVERB** (Fith).—"Let me show you how to play football." Thanks, Coker! When we complete ending our youthful careers, we'll accept the invitation and die of laughing.

### STOP PRESS

#### BIG RACE RESULT

1 FLEETING FRIAR  
2 NIMBLE NED  
3 TERRIFIC  
Won by short head; neck lost between 2nd and 3rd. Cherry Bob was 4th. No other donkeys finished!